

ABYSSUS MALI:  
OR, THE  
CORRUPTION  
OF  
Man's Nature,

BRIEFLY  
Handled in some of its Principal Parts.  
Grounded upon PSAL. 14. 1, 2, 3.

TOGETHER WITH  
MAN'S SALVATION

BY  
F A I T H  
ON THE  
*Lord Jesus Christ.*

On ACTS 16. 31.

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By *W. G.* Minister of the Gospel.

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*Gen. 6. 5, And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

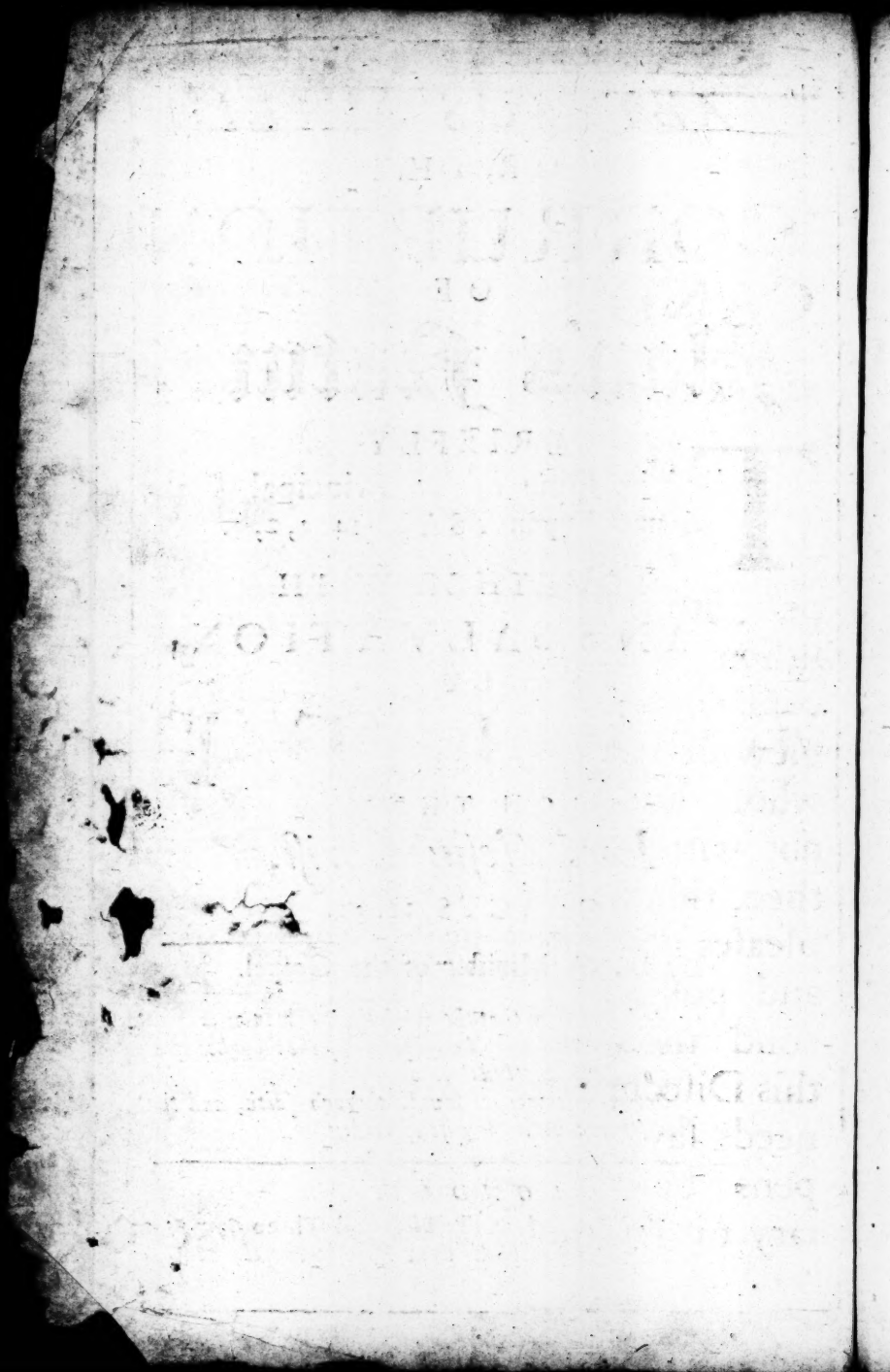
*Eph. 2. 8, For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of your selves: it is the gift of God.*

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L O N D O N,

Printed for *Tho. Parkhurst*, at the Bible and Three Crowns at the lower end of *Cheapside*, near *Mercers-Chapel*; 1676.





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TO THE  
CANDID READER.

READER,

**T**HOU may'st well think how acceptable it is (if thou thinkest well) to transmit papers into this world, a world of confusion and distraction : but I am constrained to expose these to the view of many, for the sake of some, whose hungry importunity I could not withstand. If they please not thee, think again with thy self, what pleases not thee, may profit others, and possibly thy self too, upon second thoughts. If the Subjects of this Discourse displease thee ; I must needs say, they deserve a thousand pens : but (though I thought necessary to inform my Auditors there-

*To the Reader.*

in, as I could), I was not likely to have troubled thee with any thing that I had said. I could wish another Mr. *Anthony Burges*, a Mr. *Jeanes*, another Dr. *Seaman* in the case, at whose feet I would gladly have fate. Present men, for several reasons, I forbear to mention. Satisfi'd or unsatisfi'd, I now leave thee, when I have said this: We cram not the full, but feed the hungry; and to such *every bitter thing is sweet*, Prov. 27.7. A few words to those that desire to profit by this Treatise.

1. Read it over and over, in want of better. Books of this nature (for ought I know) are like old gold in a few hands; which made me the rather willing to make this Publick. But what art thou the nearer, if thou deny thy self the due use of it?

2. Hast thou the faith of these things? labour more to improve thy sense to find them true in thine own heart,

*To the Reader.*

heart, thine own experience: Hast thou the sense of them? yet more improve thy Faith by Scripture-evidence: Take pains for that, wherein thou art most defective. It hath often been matter of trouble to me to consider, how little Christians mind to inform their judgments, and establish their Faith.

3. Mind therefore matter of proof, as well as any thing else. If I have taken more pains to prove those things, which many Discourses must rather suppose, and take for granted; I have therein more obliged thee, to endeavour thine own establishment. While we insist on the evidence and demonstration of truth, we seem to many besides the Cushion; but it is because they are not sufficiently sensible of their own concern, and the moment of truth. How many attend only to some few passages very remarkable, and affectionate, or something

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thing that speaks to their present case, or sense, and let the scope of a Discourse, and the strength of it, with the particulars pass them, as little worthy of observation; and not from defect of memory? These are likely to prove the weaker Christians. What will they do when sense fails, Satan assaults, and the Authorities of men are nothing to them? Must all Head-knowledg be meerly notional? Or doth not the Spirit sanctifie the judgment, as well as affections? or are not we to wait for it in way of diligence?

4. Think not to know truth barely by coursing over this Book, or any other, without serious attendance, and consideration of the matter and its evidence. Truth and we do not come so easily acquainted. 'Tis true, if the Almighty inspire, and assist accordingly, truth will soon be naturaliz'd to us: But how are we to expect Gods teaching? in a way of di-



*To the Reader.*

diligence, or without it?

5. Never forget praying and crying, those great Factors for spiritual wisdom: *Paul* ceases not to pray for the *Colossians*, That they may be filled with the knowledg of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, *Col. 1. 9.* And should we be wanting in it to our selves? How does *David* ply this Oar, *Psal. 119,* as if it were the almost only means for understanding! I am now willing to dismiss thee: only I must leave with thee a few Items.

1. For those speculative objections, as thou wouldst call them (tho they educe practical matter) which you may meet with, *chap. 9, 10,* either Read them, or omit them, as you see Reason. If thou seest no need, or use of them, do accordingly: They may be to some others, not only useful, but needful. I could not leave such a Doctrine wholly ex-

*To the Reader.*

pos'd, and open to cavils: And I have taken notice of those, which to me seem'd most to oppose it. I expect thy Candor, and not thy Censure; whiles I have dealt with Arguments, and not with Men. Quarrel not therefore at School-terms, which in some cases signifie most to some men.

2. If you stick at any thing of practical concernment, consult your godly judicious Ministers: Sometimes an ordinary judicious Christian may suffice: For a smaller matter may sometimes trouble a tender Conscience.

If any expect better language than they meet with: Let them know, I seek what is natural to the matter in hand, and the persons I deal with.

I now leave this with thee, and thy self and it with the Lord, begging thy Prayers.

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# ABYSSUS MALI:

OR,

The Corruption of NATURE, &c.

PSAL. 14. 1, 2, 3.

1. *The fool hath said in his heart there is no God: they are corrupt; they have done abominable works, there is none that doth good.*

2. *The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek God.*

3. *They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doth good, no not one.*

## CHAP. I.

**I** Find Interpreters differing in their sense on the Text; some saying, *David* complains only of the wickedness of his times; others, (and they the most) That it is of the universal corruption of mankind: and consequently, That the Fool in the Text, is the natural Man.

**B**

**To**

To prove that these are in the right ; I offer for it these Arguments.

1. Because, Fool is the name given in common unto all sinners in Scripture, *Prov. 10. 21. ch. 18. 2. Luke 12. 19. Eph. 5. 15. Et passim.* But natural men are such ; as will appear afterwards.

2. Who is *Nabal* properly, and correspondent unto the allusion (which is, *ad arborem marcescentem*, to a dry tree ) but, one that is *expers vite spiritualis*, void of spiritual Life ?

3. What is here in the singular, is presently turned into the plural number, *The fool hath said, &c. They are corrupt* ; intimating all and every of them so to be. And the Prophet runs it to a man, *There is none that doth good*, and *vers. 3. no not one.*

4. The enquiry, *v. 2*, is concerning the *children of men*, the Children of *Adam* as it is in the Original ; and that, *To see if there were any that did understand, &c.*

5. Put in any other wicked person, Atheist, or whom you will, and then see how it agrees. What, Did the Lord look down from Heaven, to see whether the Atheist *did understand or seek God ? &c. or do any good ?* Doth this need such examen, such enquiry ? or is it a wonder that they are abominable in their works, and do no good ?

6. Doth not the Apostle *εν τω*, alledge this very Text, to prove the universal corruption of mankind, both of Jew and Gentile ? *Rom. 3. 9, 10, 11, We have before proved Jew and Gentile, that they are all under sin, as it is written, there is none righteous, no not one ; there is none that understandeth, &c.*

Lastly, Who are Fools, but they which understand not ? and who such Fools, as they which seek not God ? which no meer Son of *Adam* doth, *v. 2.*

*Ergo.*

*Ergo.* If any object, That then every natural Man is an Atheist; have patience till I come to it.

2. If any object, That it is meant of a wicked Man; I answer, Every natural Man is a wicked Man. I shall mind you only of two Scriptures; *Mat. 25. 26, Thou wicked and slothful servant.* He is wicked that but hides his Talent in a Napkin. *Rom. 5. 6, In due time, Christ dyed for the ungodly.* Did Christ dye only for some notorious sinners? Let them speak. *Rashang* and *'Ασεβης*, answer one the other. If they say 'tis *Bux.* meant of some notorious wicked Man;

I have spoken to it Argument 5. Thus having found the subject, the natural Man, the Fool; we have in this first verse, 1. Something affirmed of him. 2. Something denied. The affirmative is threefold. 1. *Hath said in his heart there is no God.* 2. *They are corrupt.* 3. *They have done abominable works.*

2. The Negative, *There is none that doth good.*

Before we proceed, you may please to take notice, That *Psal. 53* is almost *verbatim*, the same with this 14. If you ask, what reason may be given of it?

*Ans.* 1. Because Man's Corruption is such, that he is ignorant of himself; even ignorant of his ignorance. The practical ignorance of Man's misery, is in great part his greatest misery: *Miser, quia non miserabilis*, Miserable, because insensible of his misery. *Bern.* Therefore it is inculcated.

2. The knowledg of it hardly enters. Darkness cannot comprehend it self. It must be by a borrowed light that man knows himself; it must be from something, *ab extra*, from without.

3. Though so difficult, yet requisite to a better state. *The whole need not the Physician, but they which are sick, Matt. 9. 12.*

B 2

But

But to return to our Text, and come now to observation.

*Observ.* 1. That natural Men are Fools.

I say not, but Men may have great Reason, and Wit at will (as we say) and yet be very Ideots in Gods account; or in relation to any spiritual, saving Wildom, of which the Holy Ghost speaks here. I say not, they are natural Fools.

Here I would speak to Two things briefly. 1. How doth this appear? 2. What is the extent of it?

It appears,

1. Because they are taken up with those things that are of smallest moment, and little concernment; with neglect of the best and main. *Eccles.* 10. 2. *A wise mans heart is at his right hand, but a fools heart is at his left.* Things of the right hand, are those of the greatest value and consideration; and things of the left hand, are of little or none. *Luke* 12. 20, *Thou fool, this night, &c.* Why Fool? Because he had his heart full only of trash, and cares about it. But this is every natural Mans case. *Psal.* 4. 6, *There be many that say, who will shew us any good?* Indifferent good serves their turn: And these are the *rabbim*, the many, or multitude, opposed to *us*, *David*, and such as he was.

2. Because they have no desire to know things spiritual, and of everlasting concernment. *Prov.* 1. 7, *Fools despise wisdom and instruction:* Not only, that any Man should teach them (which some spirits are above), but they are simply against instruction, against the thing taught. *Prov.* 18. 2, *A fool hath no delight in understanding; but that his heart may discover it self.* Many a Man indeed may desire to know, to talk, and discourse, and bear a part with

with others, that he may not seem a Fool: But it is to shew his pride and self-conceit: and so his heart discovers it self. This is every natural Mans temper. *Joh. 3. 20, But he that doth evil, hateth the light, &c.* I shall shew you in the sequel of the discourse, that natural Men are most properly evil-doers.

3. Because they play and trifle with their own destruction; with that which is their ruine: It is a sign they have no insight into things, nor can make any true judgment of them: That if sin be but coloured with pleasure and profit, they can make a light matter of it. What doth the Wise Man call such? *Prov. 14. 9, Fools make a mock of sin*; though it be rebellion against God, and attended with his wrath, and curse, and everlasting displeasure, without repentance. *Prov. 13. 19, It is abomination to fools, to depart from evil.* To part with the *לֵב הַנֶּחֱמָה*, the present sweet (as the Philosopher calls it) for fear of displeasing God; they loath it, because of those wretched inclinations which carry them head-long. But unto whom is it abomination? It is abomination to Fools. But thus it is with every natural Man, *Rom. 8. 5, For they which are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh*: and *vers. 9, Explains who are in the flesh, or after the flesh: But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be the spirit of God dwell in you.* But can this be said of any natural Man? *Isa. 53. 6, Every man goes his own way.* *1 Joh. 5. 19, The whole world lies in wickedness. i. e. with pleasure and delight*: and this is universally true of every person, but those which are of God, as appears in the opposition. *And we know that we are of God.*



4. Because they trust to their own wit, their own wisdom, for Heaven and happiness: let them alone; they shall do well enough, no body can teach them. Now, Who is a Fool? says Solomon, Prov. 28. 26, *He that trusteth in his own heart, is a fool.* Nay, Prov. 26. 12, *Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him.* He is a notorious Fool. But this every natural Man does. Phil. 3. 3, *We are those which rejoyce in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.* By consequence, all others trust in something else besides; which is but Flesh, whatever it be. They are of the same temper with the Pharisees: Luke 18. 9, *They trusted in themselves, that they were righteous.*

5. Because when they have a price in their hands to get wisdom, they have no heart to it, Prov. 17. 16. Though they be undone, they let slip, and pass all overtures for their good: as appears in the Church of *Laodicea*, that thought her self rich, and increased, and to have need of nothing; when she was wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, Rev. 3. 17. What Reason can be rendred, why *Laodicea* should generally be of this mind, that is not common to a natural Man?

6. Because they have neither wisdom, nor prudence; therefore Fools.

1. No Wisdom, *i. e.* no true wisdom, spiritual wisdom. For, *The wisdom that is from above, is first pure, &c. full of mercy, and good fruits, without partiality, without hypocrisie, Jam. 3. 17.* Make these good of a natural Man, and you'll say something. All the wisdom they have, is like the knowledg of second Notions, or Universals; which affects not,

2. No

2. No Prudence ; They are very Fools, *in rebus agendis*, they have no discretion to make use of what they know, for their own good, to avoid that evil they are ready to be undone by. The very wisdom of the Flesh (as in the Original) is *enmity against God*, Rom. 8. 7.

For the *minor* of all these demonstrations, should I but appeal to common experience, it is clear enough to them that have eyes, that it is thus, and so with every natural Man, *ad unum* : And that which is a common Case, must have a common Reason, an Universal defect in them all.

The prosecution of this, in the following Discourse, may excuse the present brevity.

Quest. 2. *What is the latitude of this folly ?*

1. They are such Fools, as they know not themselves ; know not their own hearts ; nor are able to make a judgment of their own ways and doings. Jer. 17. 9, *The heart is deceitful above all things ; who can know it ?* Which is spoken in relation to themselves. Paul verily thought with himself, he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus, Act. 26. 9. *Laodicea*, though professing the truth, yet knew not, *She was poor, and blind.*

2. Such Fools as they, know not the way of their happiness. *Destruction and misery are in their ways ; and the way of peace have they not known*, Rom. 3. 16, 17. *The way of life is above to the wise*, Prov. 15. 24. And it is far above, out of their sight. Paul was fain to begin again to learn his ABC.

3. To have done ; They know not any thing of a Spiritual Nature. 1 Cor. 2. 14, 15, *They are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned : but the spiritual*

*man judgeth all things.* When Peter makes a profession of his Faith, Christ tells him, *Matt. 16. 17, Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee; but my father, &c. i. e.* not any thing of self, but God.

Therefore, How should this take down all conceit of our selves? of our own worth and excellency? How low should this lay us, That naturally we know nothing saving, nor can know? It would mightily dishearten and discourage some men, if they were posted up for very Fools. The very subtlest men are Fools in Gods account. *He hath hid these things from the wise and prudent, Matt. 11. 25. i. e.* such as go swelling in their conceits, and parts; they can do any thing; and intrude themselves by their own wisdom into any thing: They are hid to such; because he is pleased not to reveal them. What a reproach was it to that great person *Claudius Caesar*? *ὁ σὺ γέρον,* &c. What! an old Man, and a Fool? Yet this is the case of many, both old and young.

*Object. All are in alike case, you say: This is something.*

*Ans.* What will this alleviate, when thy folly speaks not only thy reproach, but thine utter ruine and undoing? Thou art such a Fool, thou wilt never of thy self find the way to Heaven.

Therefore, Secondly, How should this put every Man upon looking out for help? Men use to be sensible of other defects, so as to strive to make them up. Natural defects in Reason, Scholars are willing to make up with great pains: and others,

others, any defect in their sight, or limbs, &c. And what! no care about that which will cost thee most dear, the loss of thy self, and happiness for ever?

*Quest. What means should we use?*

*Answ.* No means will do of themselves. The counsel therefore to the Church of *Laodicea*, is, *To buy of Christ. I counsel thee to buy of me eyesalve that thou mayest see*, Rev. 3. 18. *Blessed is the man whom thou teacheest*, Psal. 94. 12. Thou must be beholden to Gods Grace, to do this cure for thee: And in as much as God doth it by means, use every means that he hath commanded thee. *Prov. 2. from 2, to 7, For the Lord giveth wisdom; out of his mouth cometh knowledg; and understanding. Therefore cry after knowledg; and lift up thy voice for understanding; seek her as silver; and search for her as for hid treasures*, v. 3. 4. See the Connexion.

## CHAP. II.

**T**HE fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.

The words lying plain before me, and not needing explication so much, as the thing, I presently come to Observation.

*Observ. 2.* There is a secret Atheism in the heart of every natural Man; or, in every Man's heart by nature. *Hath said in his heart; there is no God.* Though this may seem very harsh, and hard to make good: yet I hope to make it evident.

For the clearing of it, I shall, 1. Give you certain

tain Distinctions. 2. Lay down several Conclusions.

1. The Distinctions. Atheism is either

1. Speculative, or practical.
2. Innate, or improved and heightned.
3. Secret, or profess'd and open.
4. Direct, or indirect.

To explain these,

1. Practical Atheism is, when men be, and live as if there were no God; or at least, as if he were not such a God as he hath revealed himself to be. *Psal. 36. 1, The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, there is no fear of God before his eyes. Psal. 10. 5, God is not in all his thoughts.* God is not in any of his thoughts; as one Glosses. All his thought are, there is no God, as in the Margin. They think him not so true, so holy, so just, or so good as he hath revealed himself to be. [No God] *i. e.* No such God as cares for the affairs of the World; that attends and minds the actions of Men, to take an account, and call men to a reckoning. *Psal. 50. 21, Thou thoughtest I was altogether such a one as thy self, i. e.* That either minds not, or likes very well what thou doest; or at least, will connive. Speculative Atheism is, when men cry it up as a Principle.

2. Innate, Is such Atheism as every Man brings into the World with him; which makes him prone and apt to deny a God, and live as an Atheist; and doth, *Ipso facto*, make him live, as without God in the World. Heightned and improved Atheism, is, when these opinions, either in relation to God, or his Providence, and especially his peculiar providence in reference to Salvation or Damnation, are increased and strengthened: Which usually



usually arises from the steam of a corrupt filthy heart, inured to sin and some wicked custom; left to it self, and taking occasion from such Arguments, as some like himself have started, or are ministred to him in the way of providence: which he takes to palliate his rotten Case and Conscience. *Therefore say they unto God, depart from us, Job 21. 14. Affluence without Indigence choaks the Notion of God. Dr. Jakson. p. 22.*

3. Secret Atheism is, when men neither trouble themselves nor others, ordinarily, with such thoughts, or discourses, inward, or outward; but yet there is, *ἐνδὲν*, something within, which moves them, and orders them, as if there were no God, or no Providence: Something there is, which sometimes whispers, or abets such Epicurean Principles as those, *1 Cor. 15. 32, Let's eat and drink; for to morrow we shall dye: Securi quasi futuri iudicii. De diis non habeo quid dicam. Diagor.*

Manifest and open, is, when men are come to that height, that giant-like, they are neither afraid, nor ashamed, to profess and speak, what before lay secret; and accordingly live, and do, as those who so think, and so speak.

4. Direct (to have done) is, when we either secretly, or openly deny, or question the existence of a God, or his being. Indirect, When we deny or question his Providence. *How doth God see? or is there knowledg in the most high? Psal. 73. 11. Which in effect is to deny a God.*

2. The Conclusions.

1. I say not, that every one is a speculative Atheist; but rather count they are few in comparison: For *that which may be known of God, is manifest in them, Rom. 1. 19, 20. For he hath revealed*

*unto*



unto them: for the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen. God is so clearly Printed in the Volumes of Creation and Providence, that it is hard to be a deliberate Atheist, notwithstanding the passionate and natural inclinations hereunto: And because it seems such a hard matter, to raze out common notions, from which, the Heathen have acknowledged a Deity, and an, *aliquid superius*, which kept their Consciences in awe, *Rom. 2. 15, Their conscience in the mean time accusing, or else excusing, &c.* Conscience is always in relation to a Superior: And it is a difficult thing for them that would, to turn it quite out of office, it being Gods Vicegerent. It is hard to be an absolute Atheist; I mean, to put off all sense of a Deity: *The Devils themselves believe and tremble, Jam. 2. 19.* A Thunder-clap, or a Sea-storm, may soon set the Conscience a working.

*Conclus. 2.* Yet, That there are some such Speculative Atheists, seems not to be denied. *2 Pet. 3. 3, 4, In the last days shall come scoffers, walking after their own lusts; saying, where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning: As if there were no God that minded any thing; or else had forgotten his word. Mark, They are such as walk after their own lusts; Quibus voluptas pro vita, & libido pro ratione:* Such as by Epicurism and sensuality, have brought themselves to this sad pass, drowning Conscience in Whoredom and Drunkenness: When men are so wicked, that they are fain to perswade themselves, that there is no God, or no Judg, at least, that will call them to account; that they may the better  
bear

bear up under their intollerable wickedness.

*Conclus.* 3. Practical Atheism is very common, and prevalent in every Mans heart naturally. This will appear, if we consider, 1. The common Notion and nature of Atheism and Atheists: They are such, *Qui nullum sensum divinitatis habent; qui nulla religione tanguntur*, who have no sense of a Deity; which are touched with no Religion, *Calvin* in *Ephes.* 2. 12. Though it is true, every Man naturally hath so much *lumen naturæ*, light of Nature, as to keep them from denying a God ordinarily: yet for want of a *lumen gratiæ*, light of Grace, they continue in practical Atheism for all that. For though the light of Nature, will serve to keep in some common notions of a Deity, and have some awe upon Mens Consciences; yet it will not serve to found Religion upon, or bear any such stress, as the sway and government of a Man's Life: It is not, *Principium practicum*. The Apostle tells the *Ephesians*, That before the Preaching of the Gospel, *They were, æθεοι*. Because they had no true notion of the True God; and lived without him in the World; though no question, they had the notion of a Deity.

2. Take them in their several divisions; the considerate Atheist, the plodding Atheist, the subtle politick Atheist: They all say in their heart, *Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways*, *Job* 21. 14. They see no need of living upon God, or living to Him, so long as they have the creature to live upon: Nor do trouble themselves about Religion, so long as they have any thing else to do. Where is the Man (I put it even to a Man) that desires in serious earnest, and in the secret of his Soul, that God would come and dwell

dwell with him, and rule in him?

*Conclus. 4.* This Atheism is not so much in relation to the Existence or Being of God; as to his Providence and Government; and especially, to his Spiritual Providence in his Church. They believe not, that he takes such notice and observation; that he is so angry and wrathful on the one side, or so gracious and merciful on the other side as he describes himself to be: But all these are as it were fables to them; they own him not such a God, as he represents himself to be: And so they are Atheists in relation to the true God, the God of *Israel*. To believe such a *Numen* (as the Heathen did), that they might make bold with when they would, and pacifie as they pleased: This is Atheism under the Gospel. Such thoughts as most men have of God, are like the thoughts the People had of the God of *Israel*, in *Joshua's* days: Who, though they cryed out, God forbid that they should forsake the Lord to serve other Gods; yet they had their strange gods, even then amongst them, *Josh. 24. 16, 23.* They are like the *Samaritans*, that feared the Lord, and served other Gods, *2 King. 17. 33, 34.* Though Men retain a notion of a God, yet they have such a conceit of him, that what pleaseth them, pleaseth him; and a little matter will serve turn; they may do even almost what they list; and so they do: And the ground of it is this, Atheism lies at the heart, and is the secret principle of their life. And thus Mr. *Perkins* charges the *Romanists* with Atheism, as their first great sin.

*Conclus. 5.* *Atheism* dwells in every natural man as well as any other sin; for sin is a body of death:

It is so described in Scripture; it goes not single, (as people think, they have this and that fault, and 't may be, they are all but peccadillo's to them neither), but all sin goes together in the root. Sin is a body, *Our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed*, Rom. 6. 6. *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* Rom. 7. 24. And if so, then especially are there the most considerable, principal, vital parts which maintain the old man in life and vigour: one of which is that present evil we are speaking of. *Atheism* is the Master-vein (says one) in our Original lust.

*Conclus. 6.* As *Atheism* is in every natural man, so it is prevailing in him. I do not mean it is his Master-sin, or *peccatum in deliciis*; but it is a reigning sin in him; though it may be he observes it not, it is so much in power, that it keeps him in an estrangement to God; continues him an enemy, and is the root and cause of many wickednesses. It is a prevailing sin, because he hath no sin crucified or mortified, the body of death is lively in him still; and so this, being one of the most vital parts. The best men that be, have too many thoughts this way, says *Cap.* yet, it is not a prevailing, but a mortified sin in them: What is it in a natural man then?

*Conclus. 7.* Setled *Atheism*, improved *Atheism*, though it be the distemper but of some; yet when it is so, it is *secundam naturam*, according to corrupt nature. So that when they are most depraved this way, 'tis but *ἐκ τῶν ἰστίων*, as Christ says of the Devil, *Joh. 8. 44, He speaks of his own.* It is but the intention and irruption of an old piece of self. When I say, it is but the distemper of some:  
I mean

I mean, 1. Either of some subtil, over-curious Philosophers or Politicians, who through their pride cannot allow God his Sovereignty, if he cross their Maxims: Or else, 2. Of some beastly Epicure; who indulging his sensuality, to keep all quiet, would fain perswade himself there is no God; or at least that he will not judg so severely as he hath threatned. Indulgence to corrupt affections, is the root of *Atheism*. Dr. Jackson, pag. 18, Who so forward to deny the Resurrection among the *Corinthians*, as those *Epicures*? 1 Cor. 15. 32, 33, Who say, *Let us eat and drink*, &c. Who are those scoffers that deride the coming of Christ in the last judgment? *Those who walk after their own lusts*, 2 Pet. 3. 3, 4. They were so blinded by their lusts, that they could see no reason in Gods patience and goodness to the world; and therefore concluded it casual. As ever you would avoid mad *Atheism*, take heed of walking after your own lusts, whoredom, drunkenness, and such like; for though you may think you will keep within some compass, and never be so mad as to deny a Deity, or question the God of *Israel*, (*Is thy servant a dog?* as he said), yet, consider this is the high way to it; and thy heart very prone to entertain it: for it is *secundum naturam*, when any man is thus depraved. Indulgence to violent passions settles men in the very dregs of this impiety, Dr. Jackson, pag. 29. As all passions obscure the understanding for the present; so the settling of them into habits, brings a perpetual blindness upon the soul, always breeding either obdurate *Atheism*, pernicious Heresie, or Idolatry, *id.* pag.

30.

*Conclus.* 8. And last, Men would perswade themselves



selves, there is no God if they could; and therefore, they are Atheists naturally: It is in the inclination of their hearts, and they are counted according to this. O how gladly would every natural Man (especially under arrests of Conscience) hug himself in this conceit, if it could be proved there was no God? Read but *Psal. 94. 5, 7. They break in pieces thy people, and afflict thine heritage, &c. Yet they say, the Lord shall not see; and the holy one of Jacob will not regard it.*

Therefore, 1. How should this make every Man look about him? We say not, all men in particular, are settled professed Atheists; but that they are practical Atheists, and that in prevalency; and that they have the seed of the most desperate Atheism in the World, which will certainly undo them, unless cured. For a Man that is touched with no sense of God, or Religion, must needs be out of all saving-state and saving-way. What though a Man be not presently taken off with a Paroxysm; Is therefore the Plague not dangerous, not destructive? What if some abound in Atheistical words: and thy heart be of the same matter? What if some be Atheists through subtilty, and thou by incogitancy? The Atheism of thy heart (if not cured) will corrupt more and more, until it undo thee.

2. In as much as it is a secret Atheism; this makes the case more dangerous. People are scar'd when they see Plague-sores break out: But what if it be hid to thy self? Is not the case yet worse, as it is farther from cure? The ignorance of Man's misery, keeps him in security: and absolute security, brings certain destruction, and sudden too.



When they shall say peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, 1 Thes. 5. 3.

3. As it takes from the wonder of the wickedness and profaness of our times; so it lays the wickedness of men upon themselves with aggravation. Are Men Atheists in heart, secret Atheists? It is as easie for natural Atheism to be improved, as it is for a Tree to grow that hath soil enough. It is easie for a Man that carries this about him, to be betrayed to swim with the current and tide of profaness. It is not barely evil times, and evil examples that make men evil; but the concurrence of an evil heart. The evil Servant that eat and drunk with the Drunken, *Said in his heart, my Lord delayeth his coming, Matt. 24. 48, 49.* Lay not all at the Devils door, nor other mens door; thy heart betrays thee; thine own heart is too hard for thee. There is many a fair flower spoiled by contagion: but it was in it self, of a corrupt nature; it had a catching quality.

4. This takes down the conceit of men, that live civilly and religiously as to outward performances, either ceremonial, or moral: there is a secret Atheism which themselves may be ignorant of, that spoils all. There are but few perfect Atheists (says Dr. Preston) who think there is no God, and know they do so: But there is another kind of Atheism; when a man doubts of the Deity, and observes it not: this is common. Alas! it is not Painting and Plaistering that makes a strong House, but a fair: Thy performances are but *Pulchrum edificium super cloacam*, a fair building over a jakes. The secret Atheism of thy heart, is the very reason why thou contentest thy self with

with such an out-side. This will infect all thy prayers, duties and performances, that they shall be meer bodily exercises; which profit little: (Thou canst not draw nigh to God, but by the destruction of thine Atheism; the prevalency I mean, and the dominion of it.) And some sinful distemper or other will always hold thee under, Security, Presumption, Covetousness, Uncleaness, or some filthy lust or other, until thou have some cure for this, notwithstanding all thy performances.

5. This may serve to settle, and comfort Gods People; some of which complain greatly of their Atheism, this secret Atheism: they are amaz'd to see and feel in themselves such workings of this Devil of Atheism; and hereupon quite turn themselves out of interest; as if they were no body, and had all to begin yet: Because they think Religion in truth, and the knowledg of God in truth, should have healed this long ago. I say therefore, it is natural. It is in every Man by nature: And Grace doth not perfectly, *i.e.* as to degrees, cure nature; much less presently. Grace leavens the whole lump; but not wholly, much less at first. The *Canaanites*, the old inhabitants of the Land, are left to humble thee and keep thee under. As bad sins as this, even blasphemous stirrings, not from the Devil only, but your own heart, may arise in you: For I think it too much a mistake, to lay all at the Devils door in this kind. The more sensible thou art of it, the more thou art cured, or in a way of cure. It is seldom a malady is corrected, until we find the humours stir: or a corruption mortified, until we

first have found it lively. By Grace thou art enabled to groan under it, and oppose it. The more evil it is to thee, and the more intollerable, so much the better.

*Lastly*, A few words towards the cure of this sad distemper, and I have done: which I shall direct promiscuously, both to natural men and Christians.

I. Read Scripture diligently, with Prayer and meditation. This direction may seem strange: but I speak after wiser men than my self. I say, read Scripture diligently, and not *pro forma*, or slightly. The main cure for Atheism, is the word of God. If you would convince a Heathen, turn him to the Word: and so deal with your heathenish hearts; because all exotick, external Arguments in the World, are nothing unto it. *In temptation to Atheism, keep close to the Word, and it will off*, says Cap.

*Object. But an Atheist believes not the Word: and therefore this seems most improper.*

*Answ.* But the Word manifests it self, and argues for it self, more than all the wits in the World joined together. If a Man believe not Scripture to be the Word of God; yet it is easily perswadable, that it is more probable to be so, than any other thing in the World whatever. I say again therefore, Read it much, and diligently, with prayer and meditation: and you will find no means under Heaven like it. Though one rose from the dead, it would not be so much. *They have Moses and the Prophets, &c. Luk. 16.*

29, 31, *If they hear not them; neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.* Because thou mayst have more infallible certainty from those marks and prints of Divinity that are there, than thou couldest have from any thing which he should say, that came from the dead. There are such impressions of Divinity, which are no where else to be found. *Thou hast magnified thy word, above all thy name, Psal. 138. 2.* 2. Because herein God uses to manifest himself, *He meets them that remember him in his ways, Isa. 64. 5.*

2. Attend how the Spirit of God seconds the Word in thy heart: If the secrets of thy heart be made manifest in and by it, *1 Cor. 14. 24, 25,* why shouldest thou not acknowledg God is in it of a truth? The Spirit uses to be conveyed by it? *While Peter spake these words, the holy Ghost fell down upon them that heard, Act. 10. 44.* And the Spirit, the Unction, *teaches all things; and makes all things clear, 1 Joh. 2. 20, 27.* It is the Spirits teaching in and by the Word, which confutes thy Atheism. Besides, it brings thee, *in experimentalem gustum,* into an experimental tast; and gives thee more senses than one, to perceive and judg by.

3. Mind the making good of Prophecies, and performance of promises, both in the World, and in thine own heart. See if all that hath been written in the *Old Testament,* be not much made good, and making good every day: The prediction of the Messiah; the rejection of the Jews; the manner, time, and place of Christs birth; the gradual destruction of Antichrist, &c. In hast I

leave thee, to consult thy self for the other.

4. Attend the Creation, and Mystery of Gods Providence. This is that, whereby God hath much secured us against Atheism. *For that which may be known of God, is manifest in them, &c.* How? *For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world are clearly seen, even his eternal Power and Godhead, Rom. 1. 19, 20. He that planteth the ear, shall not he hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see? Psal. 94. 8.* Could such an admirable variety, and order of those various Creatures be, but by an Infinite Wisdom? So for Providence: How comest thou, a poor creature, amongst the myriads of Men on earth, not to be neglected, but have thy provisions every day! Mind the works of Providence, in and about thy self; they are many and wonderful, have much in them to affect thee, hadst thou eyes to see them. At other times also look abroad: *For he left not himself without witness, giving them rain, and fruitful seasons, Act. 14. 17.*

5. Never dispute with the Devil; especially in time of temptation. When the Devil puts in his foot, and concerns himself in the case, turn your back upon him: That is the way. *Resist the Devil and he will flee, Jam. 4. 7.* There is no reason to think, but that he will be too hard for thee: yet if he interpose at such a time, as thou art in serious study and consideration, go on, and mind thy business. I say not, Consider not, read not, because the Devil is very busie: But keep as close to thy business as thou canst, and mind not him. We may not think, that though the Devil be abundantly above our match, that yet through the Wisdom



Wisdom and Strength of Christ, we shall not overcome him; only we undo our selves, by living within our selves. Lay what he says (if thou mind it at all) before the Lord, and beg him to rebuke him.

*Lastly*, I would say one word more to Gods People; and that is only this: Be perpetually humble. *The humble he will teach, Psal. 25. 9.* The Original may be rendred either meek or humble. And so I dismiss this first affirmative: *The fool hath said in his heart, &c.*

### CHAP. III.

**T***hey are corrupt.* How? In a few practices only? 1. This answers not to the subject, *The Fool, the sinner.* For some particular evil practices, make not an absolutely evil person, *Jam.* 3. 2.

2. It is not correspondent to the Context, and the following Predicates: *They have made their work abominable* (for so it is in the Original), meaning, that all, and every work of a natural Man is abominable; not only some particulars. It is called work here in the *singular*, Because, take them all together, they are but as one evil work, proceeding from an evil heart.

3. It agrees not with the Negative, *There is none that doth good.* If they be not corrupt by Nature, Why may they not do good, as well as evil? To be good, and yet do no good, is a strange thing; and that universally not a Man doth so, whence can this arise, but from an uni-



versal defect, which is here called Corruption? And is expounded of the Corruption of Nature.

Obſery. *Men are corrupt; they are corrupt by Nature,*

1. For explication.

1. It is not meant that their Nature is corrupt, *qua* nature, or as conſidered in it ſelf: Neither body, nor ſoul, or the powers of either are thus corrupt (as the *Manichees* of old ſaid; which made the Ancients ſpeak more ſparingly this way, leſt they ſhould ſeem to favour their fury): For Nature, as Nature, either of body or ſoul, is not only good, but very good; even the meanest and inferiour part of the ſoul, the affections, which the Stoicks blamed as corrupt; though ſome repreſent their opinion more favourably. To will in it ſelf, is not evil; but *Male velle*, *male appetere*, evilly to will and to deſire, muſt needs be ſo.

2. It is not meant, that they are corrupt only by contagion and bad example, that they contract evil only by imitation, as *Pelagius* ſaid: For ſo the Devil may be called our Father as well as *Adam*, and more properly: for he it was that ſet the firſt evil example. If we enquire how corruptions come into the World? *Peter* ſays, it is through Luſt, 2 *Pet.* 1. 4, *The corruption that is in the world, through luſt.* *Cain* did not learn to be a ſinner by evil example; at leaſt, he never ſaw his Father kill a Man. Did ever *Iſhmael* hear his Father ſcoffing at a Covenant-ſeed? Death reigned from *Adam* to *Moses*, even over them which had not ſinned after the ſimilitude of *Adams* tranſgreſſion, by actual ſin againſt a poſitive Law, as *Adam* did: As learned *Camero* interprets the words, as I remember.

3. It

3. It is not meant, that they are bad, only by reason of bad practises, or by corrupt actions only: though thus, many Men are abominable, and Ten thousand times more the children of wrath than they were before. *The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies; Psal. 58. 3.* What? Speak lies before they can speak at all? Go astray, before they can so much as go? No, but because they have a Nature that is prone this way, as soon as they have any at all. As a Lions whelp begins not to be a Lion, when it runs abroad and catches the prey; but before ever it was brought forth, even in the very womb. *Ubi aut quando fuerit tempus, cum eram innocens?* Where or when was the time that I was innocent? *Aug.*

4. But they are corrupt, by corruption inhering, not adhering only. Sin is not only *ἐνστέφανος*, *ἀμαρτία*, but it is *ἡ ἐνὸς* *ἀμαρτία*, it is sin that dwells in us, *Heb. 12. 1.* not only easily, or strongly besets *Rom. 7. 17.* us, as *Varinus* makes *ἐν* to signifie *ἐνὸς*. *Their inward part is very wickedness, Ps. 5. 9. i. e.* Their inside is altogether as bad as their out-side, wickednesses. Without are corrupt actions; within are raging, reigning, corrupt affections. *I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, thou shalt not covet. i. e.* I had not known Lust to be sin, and so sinful a sin, but by the Law. He had not known that to be covetous in inclination, or unclean in affection, was before God damnable, and destructive to his soul: He was not struck dead while now. *But when the law came,*  
*sin*

sin revived, and I dyed, Rom. 7. 7, 9.

5. Men are corrupt by Nature, *i. e. ex nativitate corrupti*. As soon as ever they are Men, they are sinful Men: as soon as they have the nature of Man; they have the nature of Sin in them, *Psal. 51. 5*. Because those inclinations are in them at first, which appear in action afterwards; *Eph. 2. 3*, *And were by nature the children of wrath*. *Ἰὰ φύσιν* is opposed to *ᾧ ἔθελ*, as *Chemnitius* observes; Nature is opposed to Custom: Children of wrath, not by Practice and Custom only, but by Nature. It is *Malum hereditarium*, as a Child partakes of Leprosie from the Father, of Spleen, or Consumption, not *Male agendo malus fit*; *sed malus factus, male agit*. It is an evil Tree, that brings forth evil Fruit: It is not the Fruit which first makes it so.

2. For Confirmation; And here I shall content my self at present, to insist only upon the Scripture-proof of it. You shall find this to be,

1. The Doctrine of *Moses*, *Gen. 5. 3*, *And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image, and called his name Seth*. He begat a Son, as like him in nature, so like him in sin. For he retained the nature of Man, though fallen; and therefore begat a Son in his own likeness: But yet his Son was in his own image also, *i. e.* like him in corruption. He was like *Adam* now, like his Father; not like God: For he had lost the Image of God, and contracted another. Compare it with *Gen. 1. 26, 27*, *Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness*; but no more of Gods Image now (*Adam* being corrupt, sends this  
down

down as an hereditary disease to all his posterity, *Rom. 5. 12, As by one man sin entred into the world. i. e. in univversum genus humanum*, That is, on all mankind, as *Austin* glosses it). It is observed this is said of *Seth*, and not of *Cain* and *Abel*: Because the propagation of the World refer'd to him; *Cain's* posterity being destroyed by the Deluge.

2. *Gen. 8. 21, For the imagination of mans heart, is evil from his youth.* God here resolves, for Christs sake (which seems to be implied, in that it is said, He smelled a sweet savour from the offerings of *Noah*) to have so much patience with human frailty, as never more universally, for mans sake, to destroy the World: and gives this Reason; *Because the imagination of mans heart, &c. q. d.* Should he bring as many floods, as mans sin deserved, there would be no end; or rather, a sudden end: all mankind would perish presently; because he is corrupt by nature, *from his youth.* The Word comprehends the state of infancy, *ab utero materno*, from the Mothers Womb. *Buxtorf.* The Conjugate is used of *Moses*, at Three Months old, *Nagnar, Exod. 2. 6.* And the babe wept; and so of Christ in infancy, *Isa. 7. 16. Negnurim, est atas puerorum a tempore, quo primum moventur in utero, Drusius. Fetzlerleb formatio cordis.* We render it the imagination: Why may it not be very properly rendred, the frame of the heart? *Mr. Ainsworth* quotes a *Rabbin* making this question; When was this figmentum infused? and answering, *Ex porta formationis.*

3. I shall only add here, that Argument from Circumcision; which makes it a clear case. You know when God comes to settle a Church, he  
com-

commanded all should be Circumcised, *Gen. 17. 12, 14, He that is eight days old shall be circumcised amongst you; every man-child in your generations. And the uncircumcised man-child shall be cut off.* Now Circumcision was but a sign of something else: and what did it signifie? The Apostle answers it, *Col. 2. 11, The putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh; i. e. the whole mass of corrupt nature. In whom also, ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands; in putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh. Putting off, i. e. disowning the whole mass of corrupt nature. Ergo, they had such a body of sin; else how could they put it off?*

2. This is the Prophets Doctrine. I shall only mind you here, of that Text which I explained before; *Psal. 58. 3, They are estranged from the womb, &c.*

2. *Psal. 51. 5, Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me, q. d. I was a sinner in the very Womb. David being humbling himself here for his great sins, and aggravating the matter as much as may be; he comes to this. q. d. But what do I speak thus? My very Mass is corrupt: I am nothing of my self, nor ever was, but a very enemy to God, as soon as I had any being. I know it is very frequent with Grotius, to say these are Hyperboles, as he doth here υπερβολικόν ἵ. But, David is not at his Hyperbole's here; when in the most serious posture of humiliation that can be, and cut at the very heart to think against thee, thee only have I sinned v. 4. He is is past complementing with God, and speaking what he never thought: No, no, he is for deba-*



debasings himself as low as may be. *I was shapen in iniquity, q. d.* Not only these, but a Thousand Murthers and Adulteries are in my nature.

3. Isa. 48. 8, *For I knew that thou wouldst deal very treacherously; and wast called a transgressor from the womb.* God tells them, that he had before-hand revealed his mind; and told them what he would do, before he did it: that they might not say they came by chance, or their Idol did it, *vers. 5.* And gives the Reason; *Because thou wast a transgressor from the womb:* And therefore I expected no better, then that thou wouldst deal very treacherously.

3. It is the Doctrine of Christ himself. *Joh. 3. 6, For that that is born of flesh, is flesh. q. d.* That which is of a corrupt Original, is flesh in the abstract, *i. e.* nothing but carnal. Christ is here shewing the necessity of Regeneration from this Argument, *That which is born of flesh, is flesh;* and therefore must of necessity be born again. He told *Nicodemus*, that otherwise he could not so much as understand the things of the Kingdom of God, and Salvation, who came swelling with conceit of himself, being a Doctor of Law, that he could understand any thing.

2. *Joh. 6. 44, No man can come, except the father who hath sent me draw him.* Where Christ shews, that a Man is disabled, not only as to the Law, to save himself by working, and doing; but even as to the Gospel, by believing in Christ. Though Salvation be offered Man upon receiving; yet this he cannot do, he cannot come, except drawn, *i. e.* (to make few words) *per viatricem quandam delectationem*, by a certain conquering,  
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overcoming delight, as *Jansenius*. He cannot; it is not meant barely, for want of assisting grace: for shall a man be said to be potent, or impotent, meerly from that which is without him?

4. This is also the Apostles Doctrine; you know what I have said already upon, *Eph. 2. 3.* To let that pass therefore, consider *Rom. 5. 12.* *Wherefore as by one man, sin entred into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men; for that all have sinned in q̄, in whom all have sinned.* The Apostle is arguing for free justification by Christ: And the Argument lies thus. *As by one man sin entered, and death by sin: so by one man righteousness entered, and life by righteousness.* Sin came in by *Adam*, *In universum genus humanum*, as before. *Adam* having corrupted his nature, as a common root, and original, he corrupts ours; and that, not barely by imputation, but by propagation, and deriving of a sinful nature unto us. *Vers. 13.* *For until the law, sin was in the world:* (Men were continually sinning,) and not only actual sin, against a positive law; but an universal corruption of nature, contrary to the whole Law, understood by this one word Sin, in *Singulari*. And the Law only entered, that this sin might abound, *v. 20. i. e.* in the sight and sense of it: that they might discover it, and the abounding of it, and how greatly obnoxious they were by it.

2. *Rom. 7. 18.* *For I know, that in me, that is in my flesh, i. e.* (in me, further than renewed and sanctified) *there dwells no good.* As a regenerate man, he complains of himself so far as unregenerate, or not renewed. The Argument then lies thus.

thus: If in the best, farther than they are regenerate and sanctified, there is no good; then in all Men by nature, or not regenerate, there is no good at all; which was the thing to be proved: Men are corrupt, corrupt by nature. And now I have done with the second Particular, the Confirmation: Wherein it was my design, to give you some of the main Scriptures, wherein this Doctrine of the Corruption of Nature is founded; and prepare them for your meditation.

*Quest. How comes any to be otherwise? Many there are that are otherwise in part, How comes it? I answer with Paul, By the grace of God. 1 Cor. 15. 10, By the grace of God, I am what I am. q. d. I say not what it is; but whatever it is, by the Grace of God it is. Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace, Joh. 1. 16.*

1. This shews, that Men and Women have reason, great reason to be troubled, even where they discern no great ground of trouble. We are commonly not startled, or affrighted, but under the conviction of actual sins: but here appears great reason to be troubled upon another account. Not to enter into dispute now (it not lying so fairly in my way here) which is the worst, a bad heart, or a bad conversation. They are both bad to be sure, and both will undo thee: (that's enough for my purpose): and evil of heart and nature, is most likely to undo thee; because thou takest no notice of it, nor believest it, *cum affectu*, so as to be affected with it. Thou art wretched and miserable, and knowest it not. Lord help me,

me, I never thought of it, will one say. What, ignorant of thy self, thy heart, thy nature! And which is yet worse, people think it is an excuse; It is my nature, I am so passionate, so hasty, &c. Who was more likely to find pardon of the two, one that was a Thief by nature, and inclination; or another poor Man, that once Stole through streights and temptation?

2. This cuts the sinews of *Pharasaism*: which is, if they be free from outward evils, they bless themselves then well enough. *God I thank thee I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican, Luke 18. 11.* These men could bear a desperate malice in their hearts against Christ, and seek by all means to slay him; and yet thought themselves well, because *Abrahams Children, Job. 8. from 33, to 40.* And many that live in sins as contrary, yet think highly of themselves. But if Men are corrupt by nature, this will damn them, and undo them, though they were otherwise blameless, *Phil. 3. 6. Paul, though blameless, was yet struck dead at the sight of his nature: The discovery of his inward original corruption slew him. Sin revived, and I dyed, Rom. 7. 9.* To conclude, I shall only answer this practical question, How should a Man do to be convinced of this corruption of nature?

*Ans.* 1. Let him trace the evils of his life, to the fountain. Thus David did. *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, &c. Psal. 51. 5.* These evils I have done; but there are many hundreds in my nature. Thou trap'st thy self in drunkenness: follow this home, and you will find it springs from many bitter roots; infidelity, inordinate self-love,

love; creature-love, and the like.

2. Observe and consider the inward motions of thy heart, as well as the outward actions of thy life. *The motions of sin did work in our members, bringing forth fruit unto death, Rom. 7. 5.* How can you but observe in your own hearts several wicked motions, which before God are great sins? *He that is angry with his brother without a cause, i. e. without a sufficient cause, shall be in danger of the judgment. He that looketh upon a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery already with her in his heart, Matt. 5. 22, 28.* By the observation of these, and the like, thou maist come to know, by Gods blessing, thine own nature.

3. Mind your heartlessness unto, and in any thing that is good: How loth to set about something, that is but materially good. Or if ready to hear, &c. observe with what serious purpose, and design it is, to please God, or profit thine own soul. Art thou not satisfied with meer hearing of the Word, though thou *mix it not with faith?* Heb. 4. 2. or *receive it in the love of it,* 2Thes. 2. 10, or though without any understanding, or affection? So, if thou hast coursed over a Prayer, does not this please thee, though there hath been no acting of repentance, confession from the heart, sorrow and humiliation for thy sin, sincerity, or ardency in thy requests; nor any communion with God in it: Though thou *only draw nigh with thy lips, and thy heart is far from God,* Matt. 15. 8.

*Lastly,* To have done, consider what motives and ends thou propoundest to thy self in doing. *If thine eye be single, thy whole body is full of light;*

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but if thine eye be evil, (i. e. thy aim and intention in what thou doest) thy whole body shall be full of darkness, *Matt. 6. 22, 23.* The best, and most extraordinary duties, fasting, prayer, alms-deeds, to be seen of Men, find no acceptance with God, *Matt. 6. 2, 5, 16,* but they may serve here, to shew thee thy rotten heart. Now I perceive thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity, *Act. 8. 23;* Because he had an ambitious aim, or covetous intention, in desiring the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

## CHAP. IV.

**T**hey are corrupt.

There is no concord in our languages; but it is an *Hebraism*, a manner of speaking peculiar to the Jews, and very Emphatical amongst them. Here is a *Verb plural*, with a *Noun singular*. *Nabal Hirschithu.* Distribution is noted, as they call it, *q. d.* all, and every one of them are corrupt. And because this universality I have often offering it self; I shall here speak to it once for all.

Observ. 4. *All, and every Man is thus corrupt by Nature.*

This Doctrine is laid down in these Verses,  
1. Affirmatively, *vers. 1, They are corrupt, they have done abominable works.* *Verf. 3, They are all gone aside.* 2. Negatively, *vers. 1, There is none that doth good,* *verf. 3, No not one.*

1. For explication in a few words.

1. This



1. This is understood of the whole Kind; or it is comprehensive of both Sexes: lest any should be so ignorant, as to think that men alone were concerned. For, 2. Man is oft the name of the Kind, and not of the Sex. *Gen. 5. 1, 2, Male and female created he them, and blessed them; and called their names Adam. Gen. 8. 21, For the imagination of the heart of man, of Adam, (i. e. both Male and Female) was evil.* And as formerly, the Woman was reputed as circumcised in the Male; so now, both are baptized to signifie the same thing.

2. As in the second *Adam*, *There is neither male nor female; but all are one in Christ, Gal. 3. 28,* So is it in the first *Adam* also.

2. Persons of all Nations, Jews, or Gentiles, are all thus corrupt, *i. e.* all the World, of what Nation soever. For the Jew signifies that peculiar People that was in Covenant with God: and Gentiles signifie all the Nations of the earth beside: and therefore are indefinitely called Gentiles, without any peculiar mark or note of distinction. You find the Apostle applying this corruption to them both. *What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin, Rom. 3. 9, 10, as it is written:* And then quotes this Text, lest either the Gentiles should think, that because they had no Law (*i. e.* no positive Law as the Jews had) therefore they had no transgression: or the Jew, *e contra*, that because they were in Covenant, and had the outward signs of Gods Grace, therefore they had no sin. And concludes, *vers. 19, That every mouth may be stop-*



*Ped, and all the world become guilty before God. Col. 3. 10, In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, &c. None, but in and through Christ, may be accepted, by Grace may be saved; by Nature all are damnable.*

3. This is true also, of Gods people by nature, as well as others. They are of the same Cloth (as we say), only the Shears went between. By Nature they were as corrupt and bad as others; and still (though Grace make as considerable a difference, as between darkness and light) are corrupt as well as others, *Eph. 5. 8. Amongst whom, we all had our conversations in times past, &c. and were by nature the children of wrath, as well as others, Eph. 2. 2, 3:* which is meant of true Christians, whether Jews or Gentiles; as appears by the opposition, *to the children of disobedience, vers. 2.* They were, and they are, I say, still by nature corrupt; though with a world of difference from other Men. Consult *Col. 3. 8, 9, Now ye also put off all these, &c. seeing ye have put off the old man.* Without any great enquiry (because it is, but *in transitu*) this is obvious: They have put him off, though but in part put him off.

Thus you see Men or Women, of this Nation, or that, professing or profane, Saints or others, by nature what they are.

*Quest. 1. How comes this to be so?*

*Ans. 1.* Because they have all but one common nature. This nature being defiled in the root, and fountain, *viz. Adam,* This corruption comes to be derived and diffused all the World over. *Persona polluit naturam, & natura polluit personam.*

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The person first defiled the nature, and ever after the nature defiles the person. But this is not all: for Man might have stood upon the same terms the Angels did, every one singly for himself. Therefore,

2. *Adam* our natural head, was also made our political head, *i. e.* he was appointed of God to be the Representative of all mankind. He and we, *i. e.* all his posterity are look'd upon but as one covenant-party: So what he lost, he lost for himself, and us too. And thus the *ἐφ' ᾧ*, *Rom. 5. 12*, is of easie solution. Both these are abundantly proved, *Rom. 5. from 12, to the end*: Where the Apostle speaks of the first *Adam* as the head of all mankind; and the second *Adam*, as the head of the elect: And shews that as sin and death came by one, so righteousness and life by the other.

Quest. 2. *But are all men alike corrupt by Nature?*

Ans. Yea, by Nature one is as bad as another, and as deep in sin as another. Some indeed are much more abominable in practice than others are; and one Mans corruption runs out this way, and anothers that, according to temper, and temptation: Yet that humour that falls into one Mans Leg, and swells another Mans Arm, may be the same in kind, though it work several ways. If some be restrained by better education, others by fear of shame or punishment; yet this speaks not, but their hearts are naturally as bad, and have as many seeds of sin in them as any; though not heightened by custom and practice.

The Reasons why all Men are alike sinful by Nature, are,

1. Because all partake equally of the Nature; and none is otherwise related to the head and fountain of it, I mean *Adam*, than another. Can you say any one is more a-kin to *Adam*, than his Neighbour, when we are all his sons and daughters in common? Some indeed are so improved in wickedness, that they may seem to deserve to be called the first-born of *Adam*: But this is but rhetorically when all is said.

2. Because corruption of Nature consists in *carrentia justitiæ originalis*, in the want of original righteousness. But this is alike in all. Every one wants the Image of God, and every part of it (take Image properly) as well as others. It was lost whole and all. If Grace be the having original righteousness, then Sin (its direct opposite) is the wanting of original righteousness: which because all want alike, therefore it is Men are all alike corrupt by Nature. What is sin but a defect? a want of what should be? *justitiæ debita in esse*? What is then original sin, but a want of original righteousness?

This shews, 1. Those excuses commonly in the mouths of Men are of no avail. Be they never so wicked, and make themselves never so vile, yet they mean no hurt, their heart is good. No, Whence come those evil courses and actions, but from an evil heart? *An evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth evil things: For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, &c. Matt. 11. 5, 19.* And whence comes thy heart to be such an evil treasure, but from an evil Nature?

2. Let

2. Let a natural Mans actions be never so good outwardly, his conversation civil and honest, his duties and performances plausibly good: yet this spoils all, his evil Nature. They are defiled in their original, they come but from self-respect at the best, they have no higher a principle than self, and therefore can have no higher an end. It is ill Divinity therefore, to say a fair conversation alone proves a true Christian.

3. It follows then, that every Man is miserable by nature; and much more those, who are continually adding sin to sin (as every grown person doth) treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, *Rom. 2. 7.*

4. This shews the necessity that every one hath of regeneration. Mind Christs Argument, *Joh. 3. 6, That which is born of the flesh, is flesh:* Therefore, *except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* You see the demonstration here, corrupt Nature cannot enter; therefore there is a necessity of Regeneration. Every Man is corrupt; therefore no Man can enter without being born again. Think you that those Men that are strangers to God, shall ever come in Heaven? Much less can you think, that those that are enemies shall ever enter. No surely, he never prepared Heaven for his enemies. Regeneration is that which is directly opposite to this corrupt, for it is renewed nature.

5. Every one needs a Christ, and a new State, *i. e.* a relative state: for Regeneration is an absolute. Because, being corrupt by nature they need pardon and remission, and therefore a Christ: *For without blood, no remission, Heb. 9. 22.* And with-

out a part in Christ, no share in his blood. I desire you seriously to consider, and give yourselves an impartial account, what is the meaning of that phrase you so often meet with in Scripture, *viz. Being in Christ?* Rom. 8. 1. 2 Cor. 5. 17. To interpret it, as many do, of a new absolute State, is a strange thing: For then mind how that place would run, (2 Cor. 5. 17, *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature*) if any Man be a new creature, he is a new creature. Let them choose such interpretations that please.

6. This serves, as to humble the people of God, so to caution them, They carry about them an evil Nature as well as others. Let this make them very wary and watchful against temptation and occasions to sin. If Grace have made a difference, (as it doth a great one, as I have hinted before) yet, they bear about them an old man continually, that exposes them unto every evil: Therefore carry a wary eye, and strict hand over your selves; come not upon the Devils ground.

7. This may serve to comfort Gods people under their sins and imperfections. They have not quite put off their old man; yet they are not servants unto sin. Rom. 7. 24, compared with Rom. 6. 16, 17, 18. The knowledg of these two principles in them, Nature, and Grace, is a necessary ingredient to their comfort.



CHAP. V.

**H**ERE is yet another proposition offers it self to me, in these words: which because of its usefulness, I am not willing to let pass, though it be not obvious to a common Auditor. I must therefore acquaint you with the meaning of the *Hebrew*. The word signifies *fecerunt se corruptos*, they have made themselves corrupt, whence

Observ. 9. *Men are corrupt by their own fault.*

And though I seem to differ in words from the Orthodox; yet I do not know, that in any thing I differ in sense. I desire therefore, you warily attend the following Discourse.

We are generally corrupt; and though never so corrupt, yet we are as generally excusing our selves, and ready to turn the blame upon others. *Gen. 3. 12, And the man said, the woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And vers. 13, The woman said, the serpent beguiled me.* The intent therefore of this Discourse, is to shew that we cannot excuse our selves, and turn the blame upon any other; but it will lie at our own door.

1. If we speak of actual sins, or customary, the case will be clear in a few words. We cannot lay the fault upon others, so as to excuse our selves; but the great blame must be our own. 'Tis true indeed, the World is full of bad examples, and bad counsels; but these cannot necessitate us to sin. Examples indeed are said to draw,

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*Exempla trahunt*; but the meaning is, by a Metaphorical, not a proper motion: For they are no principles within, but something wholly without us. Therefore, when ever a Man sins, there must be some more nearer and proper cause than they. *Trahit sua quemq; voluptas*, every Mans own lust draws him. The Devil can do a great deal more towards making us to sin, than thus; and yet he is not the proper cause of our sin. As they cannot be the reason of our sin, therefore not our excuse. But because this Discourse looks farther than meer actual sin; I shall endeavour to shew you,

1. That we cannot excuse our selves, and lay the fault of our corrupt nature at the Devils door; though the Devil cannot be excused from sin, because he gave the first evil example, and the first evil counsel: yet he could but tempt, and not necessitate; he cannot make us will, whether we will or no: Therefore to will evil, is our own fault. It is true, he is said *effectually to work in the children of disobedience*, Eph. 2. 2. And *That they are taken captive by him, at his will*, 2 Tim. 2. 26. But they are willingly so snared, and willingly sin; they betray themselves. *The lusts of your father ye will do*, Job. 8. 44. He tempted Eve (so he did Christ; it is not absolutely evil to be tempted) but she tempted her self, by listening and giving ear to his temptation. So Adam tempted himself by hearkning to her. A Man is then tempted indeed, when his own heart admits the temptation.

2. We cannot lay all the blame at Adams door, and excuse our selves; as they would in the Prophet,

phet, in something a different case: *The fathers have eaten sowre grapes, and the childrens teeth are set on edge, Ezek. 18. 2.* *Adams* sinning excuses no Man; and that not only in actual transgression, (wherein it is evident, Men are doing the same thing every day, over and over, that *Adam* did once; transgressing the command of God, and eating the forbidden fruit) but even in the natural, habitual inclination of their heart. They are contented, pleased, delighted, not only to do as they do, but to be as they are. Their very corrupt nature pleases them; and they would not be without their lust; or be perswaded to part with it for any thing. Take a covetous Man, or a voluptuous Man, and their will is their pleasure, and their kingdom; the greatest good to them that can be. Whereby they dayly, and continually own, and allow what *Adam* did: which makes it their own personal sin, over and over, by actual allowance.

Object. *But this is, because we had a sinful nature first from him.*

I Answer, Had every particular Man and Woman in the World been in *Adams* case, and put into his circumstances, they would have done just as he did: Thou hast little reason therefore, to condemn *Adam* and justifie thy self. Had we been in *Adams* stead, and though we had had *Adams* grace to stand, we should even have corrupted our selves, and done as he did. I think this will be pretty clear, if we consider, that *a posse non peccare*, is not a sufficient determination of the will,

will, *ad non peccandum*, to say that we should have us'd our power better, is too much presumption for any Son of *Adam*.

3. And more properly, *Adam* and we are look'd upon but as one Covenant-party. I would ask any Man this question, whether that command, *Gen. 2. 16, 17, And the Lord God comand-ed the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou maißt freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledg of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it*, reached the person of *Adam* only, and no farther? *Omnes homines quasi unus homo, & tota communitas sunt tanquam multa membra unius corporis. Aquin.* All Men are as one Man: and the whole Community, as many members of one body. What the Representative of a corporation doth, is looked upon as the act of that whole body.

4. What though it come by *Adam*, our corrupt Nature I mean; is it not ours therefore? And is not a Man to be blamed for that which is his own fault? Doth any man say, That that renewing grace, inward grace which comes by Jesus Christ is not his own, though Christ be the fountain of it? What if a Man be born a Traytor, *i. e.* of the same nature and disposition with his father, is he therefore not as dangerous as his Father, and as evil?

3. And lastly, Much less can we lay the blame at Gods door. *Adam* seemed willing to lay it here, *Gen. 3. 12, The woman thou gavest me, she gave me, &c.* Tacitly intimating, God was to-blame in giving him the Woman. The Apostle *James* in his time, either saw, or foresaw the same wickedness, as may be gathered from that Text,

*Jam.*

*Jam. 1. 13, Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God. No, Is it not said, God tempted Abraham, Gen. 22. 1? Yea, it's true, he brought him into such circumstances, to try him what he would do; and so he did Adam; and so he doth us many times: but he put no sin in Adam, or in Abraham, &c. No, Eccles. 7. ult. God made man upright, Jashar, right and straight, but he sought out many inventions. They are his own seeking, his own doing, figmentum cordis sui, ultor peccati non est Author peccati. The avenger of sin, is not the Author of sin: And God is the avenger of all such, 1 Thes. 4. 6.*

*Object. But God could have hindred it if he would; therefore God is to-blame.*

*Ans. 1. God could have hindred it if he pleased: For nihil fit, nisi Deo volente, aut permittente, nothing is done, unless God will, or permit, Aug. He could have given him confirming-grace, as he did the Angels; or he could have restrained the Devil, and never have put him upon the temptation; or he could have annihilated him before he sinned, had it pleased him; but to say, that God was therefore culpable, far be it from us:*

*1. Because God was not bound to hinder it. It is true, that evil we hinder not, which we can morally, that is, in our place, and way, we are some way guilty of, as Eli, 1 Sam. 2. But the Supream is under no such law.*

*2. Because, in gratuitis non est lex, in matter of gift there is no law. Shall a Beggar say, he hath given me so much; therefore he is bound to give me more?*

*3. What*



3. What if God, who can bring good out of evil, had a design to glorifie himself some other way; permitting it to be, or not hindering, for a farther good end? *Omnipotens nullo modo sineret aliquid mali esse, nisi ex malo, &c.* The Omnipotent would by no means suffer any evil to be, unless out of it he could bring a greater good.

Object. 2. *But why is Man to blame? Adam, or others?*

*Answ.* Because they sinned, and sinned freely: As it is said of the Angels, *They left their own habitation, Jud. 6. i. e.* freely, and voluntarily; so Man left his own standing. It is his own seeking, *He sought out many inventions, Eccles. 7. ult.* See Adams own acknowledgment, *She gave me, and I did eat, Gen. 3. 12. The lusts of your father ye will do.*

Object. *But, then is not God to-blame, to make Man of a free-will?*

*Answ.* Not at all: For unless Man had been of a free-will, he could no more have done good than evil; and had never been capable of happiness or misery. If Man be made to do good, and be happy, he must be made with a free-will: From this free-will he lost himself. *Homo male utens libero arbitrio, se perdidit, Aug.*

*Inst.* If you urge yet, and ask why did not God confirm him, and put him beyond a possibility of sinning? I answer with the Apostle. *Who art thou, O man, that replyest against God?*

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Rom. 9. 20. *Who made thee of Gods counsel?* Rom. 11. 34. Or wilt thou, dar'st thou take upon thee to instruct him? The Apostle cries out, *3 Advers, O the depth, &c.* which he speaks of Gods counsel concerning the rejection of the Jews, and calling of the Gentiles. Thou art a strange Man, whom nothing will satisfie, but the reason of His Will. This may suffice; God made Man a reasonable creature, and he made himself a sinner.

The natural use of this Doctrine is humbling and self-abasing, as leaving us without all excuse. And this is the very design of God, in revealing the Law, and discovering our natures, to lay us in the dust before him, as guilty creatures, self-undone. *The law entred, that sin might abound, Rom. 5. 20. i. e.* in the sight and sense of it. Therefore it is said, *Gal. 3. 24, The law was our school-master, to bring us to Christ: that we might be justified by faith.* This is spoken of the moral Law; which so convinces us every way of sin; that there is no way to be justified but by Faith. Men generally think nothing of sin, not of sinful practices, and sinful courses; but go on without consideration; but if they do so, few, or none, that think of this sin of their hearts, which is continually working death: or if so, who thinks of the damning corruption of his Nature? It is the seed of all those corruptions, both in heart and life: or if so, we are naturally prone to turn it off any where. I have shewed you, it will lie at our own doors. Sin of Nature indeed is necessarily ours; but yet it is freely ours: we choose our own ways, and delight our selves in our own inventions. Go home therefore, and for ever hereafter  
fault

fault your selves. This drives Men to the last bay, and quite outs them of their utmost refuge.

2. This checks our murmuring. The punishment of our iniquity is justly entail'd upon our selves. *Why doth man complain for the punishment of his sins? Search and try your ways, &c. Lam.*

3. 39, 40. *We suffer justly, as the thief said, Luk.*

23. 41. And in this life always very mercifully too, *i. e. less than our iniquities deserve.* Are you under the wrath of God, trouble of Conscience, and many evils besides, upon your bodies, families, &c? Own all the punishment, and misery, as your desert, and Hell and damnation too, at the last. *Thy ways, and thy doings have procured these things unto thee; this is thy wickedness, Jer. 4. 18. q. d.* Now you see what 'tis to sin. *O Israel thou hast destroyed thy self; Hos. 13. 9. God will be justified, when he speaks, and clear when he judges, Psal. 51. 4.* Whatever you feel, or fear, condemn your selves, this is the way. It is true, God makes Hell and misery, but you provoke him.

*Quest. 1. If Men be corrupt by their own fault; then, cannot they mend themselves, correct their errors, and there's an end?*

*Ans. Corrupt practices, they may in a sort mend. Let him that stole, steal no more, Eph. 4. 28. They may temperare se, though not sancte, Dr. Twiss; abstain, but not in a gracious manner. But remember we are speaking of corrupt Nature: And here I answer, briefly with the Prophet, Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the Leopard his spots? Jer. 13. 23. He takes it for granted,*

granted, they cannot. Why? Because it is natural. *Much less can ye, when accustomed to do evil;* and have a second Nature super-added to the first habit, I mean to corrupt Nature, *do well.*

Quest. 2. *Is there any hope for such, that they may become otherwise?*

*Ans.* 1. For those that see it, and are dejected, humbled, and sensible (which only look after hope) there is hope. There is a two-fold sense of sin. 1. Either of the evil Nature of it: Or 2. The evil consequents. The first is a sign of a good estate at present, and the others are in a hopeful way. When men begin to fault themselves, and are brought upon their knees; there is hope. *Arise and go to Saul, for behold he prays,* *Act.* 9. 11. All that ever were saved, were under the same corrupt Nature; and as deep in it as you are. When Thousands, and Ten thousands as bad by Nature as your selves, have been saved; is there any reason you should despair? Labour after more sense of corrupt Nature: This gives a Convert mighty advantage.

2. For others, though there be little appearance of hope; because they are not sensible, and cast down: yet I say, God can meet with them, and knows how to mend them. It is true; it is a wonder and miracle if God do it! But *his work is honourable and glorious,* *Psal.* 111. 2. *The hour cometh, and now is,* says Christ, *that the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear, shall live,* *Joh.* 5. 25. A dead man hear? and a  
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dead man live? Yea, Jesus Christ can speak so effectually, as to give a dead man ears, and life too, *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thy self; but in me, is thy help, Hos. 13. 9.* How did they destroy themselves? by willful Idolatry, and at last persisting in wilful opposition to Jesus Christ. And yet, concerning that people, *non conclamatum est*; they are not dead and buried too, past hope of recovery. No, *Their calling shall be life from the dead, Rom. 11. 15.* Let no man look upon his case as absolutely desperate: There is never a word of present comfort to be spoken unto such, (especially those, who notwithstanding they hear the words of this Curse, shall bless themselves, *Deut. 29, 12.*) but only a possibility (which yet millions perish under), thou maist be saved; but then thou must well learn the Lesson of the Text, and think sadly and seriously on it. *He hath concluded all under unbelief* (speaking of the Jews), *that he might have mercy upon all, Rom. 11. 32. i. e.* That unto all those that do believe, it might be meer mercy that they believe, being of themselves shut up under unbelief. And thus I have done with the second Affirmative.



CHAP. VI.

Verf. 1. **T**hey have done abominable works.

According to the Hebrew, *fecerunt abominabile opus suum*, They have made abominable their work: For it is in *Hiphil*, *Actionem in singulari*, i. e. *singulas actiones*, as *Gejerus*; as if all were but one work, because all corrupt: *Nec quicquam recte operantur*, says *Vatablus*, nor do they any thing aright: The proper consequent of corrupt nature, which as an impure fountain, vitiates all her streams. Abominable, What's that? It is properly; *quod propter foetorem averfamur*; stinking, nasty; that which we turn from, because of its evil favour: It is what creates a loathing to the senses, peculiarly that of scent, and smelling. *The cup of her abominations, and her filthiness*, Rev. 17. 4. *βδελυγμάτων*, which is interpreted of her false, Antichristian Doctrines: and that this word is used of such things, as unto men seem less; to have little hurt in them, if not good; see *Luk. 16. 15*, *Ye are they which justify your selves; but these things which are highly esteemed among men, are abomination in the sight of God.*

Observ. 6. *The works of a natural man, are all of them abominable works.*

If corrupt, because they come from a corrupt fountain, a rotten heart; then they all of them are corrupt, and are all but as one corrupt action.

1. For explication, They are abominable, *i. e.* such as God loaths, detests, cannot endure, are not pleasing, but very displeasing to him and that for their ill favour. As God is said sometimes, *to smell* in the sacrifices of his people, *Gen. 8. 21*, and to be delighted with their well-doing: The works of a natural Man, *e contra*, are all such, as are unsavory and displeasing to him. *Bring no more vain oblations, incense is an abomination to me; the new-moons, and sabbaths, and calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; your appointed feasts, my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me, I am weary to bear them, Isa. 1. 13, 14.* As the like phrase you have, *Prov. 6. 16, Six things the Lord hates; yea, seven are an abomination to him.* You know how tedious some scents and smells are to some persons. God is displeased at the works and doings of a natural Man; as the nicest sense is, with that which is most contrary to it. But

2. Are all the works of a natural Man thus? Lord have mercy upon us then!

*Answ.* Yes, but with a difference. 1. Some are simply and in themselves so. 2. Others compoundedly so. *i. e.* Take all that goes to them, and they are so. They are all abominable, though not all alike abominable; *aqua ac*, though not *qualiter*.

1. Such as are directly and diametrically opposite to God, and his Will, and Word. Such are those, that manifesty smell of corrupt nature, and are rank of the flesh; such as the Apostle says, are manifest works of the flesh. *Gal. 5. 19, 20, 21, The works of the flesh are manifest, &c. q. d.* It is easie to know them; and to know your selves  
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by them. I shall a little therefore insist upon the particulars, [*Which are these, adultery, i. e. when the wickedness is committed with a married person; [fornication, when with a single [uncleanness, This may be with a Man's self, and many other ways, besides the forementioned. [lasciviousness: the degrees and preludes of the same are so called, though it proceed not to the utmost bounds; as wanton speeches, gestures, behaviours, undue approaches, dalliances, &c. [Idolatry; When Men worship an Idol, or an Image, though pretending to worship God by it. [Witchcraft, evils done by compact, or the power of the Devil. [Hatred, malice, evil-will against another in heart, let him be friend or foe. [Revelling, excess of meat, as well as drink, with such mad frolicks, as many times follow thereupon. These are manifest works of the flesh, and in themselves abominable to God; and so they render those persons that live in them. They are abomination: The word is used sometimes to signify something of special hatred, and dislike; which God hates above others. Six things the Lord hates: yea, seven are an abomination unto him, Prov. 6. 16, O do not that abominable thing which my soul hates, meaning Idolatry: but not only the outward works of these, and the like; but even the inwards acts and degrees are of the same kind, and abominable, as the imagination; the first framing, peeping, and appearance of evil thoughts; the very Corruption of the fancy; the first motions and stirrings of the affections; especially the devices, study, plotting, and contrivance of that which is evil, the Machsheboth, the deliberate thoughts and purposes, Gen. 8. 21. Prov. 24. 9.*

The first motions and intentions, the last purposes and resolutions; the very first inclinations hereto, without sollicitation, *Rom. 7. 7. Col. 3. 5.*

2. Such as are compoundedly evil, i. e. counting, and taking with them, what must necessarily go unto them, they are evil also, and abominable. *For God is of purer eyes, than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity, i. e. any iniquity, and evil. Hab. 1. 13.* which signifies the same I say; they are abominable. And here,

1. The natural actions of a natural Man are such; as eating, drinking, sleeping, &c. Not in themselves, and in kind, but as they are used, or as he orders the matter, so they are all evil, because they smell of the Cask; the evil person defiles them all. Why? because, *Though the Kingdom of God be not meat and drink, Rom. 4. 17, 18.* Yet, *As he that in these things serves the Lord Christ, is acceptable:* So he, that in them serves him not, is abominable: He that eats not with intention to serve the Lord, his eating and drinking is irregular, though it be not to excess, *1 Cor. 10. 31.*

2. All civil, and secular actions; working, trading, recreations, discoursing, conversing, are all evil in a natural Man, *Prov. 21. 4, And the plowing of the wicked is sin:* Plowing, Why so? Because he neither plows nor sows as a servant of Jesus Christ; but as one, that does his own will only, *Hag. 2. 14, So is this people, and so is this nation, and so is every work of their hand, i. e. unclean, as you may see in the context, Isa. 5. 12, The harp, and the viol, and the tabret and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither*

ther consider the operation of his hands. See, *Amos. 6. 5.*

3. Here you see working and playing are all abominable; for what reason? Even for that which is the reason with every natural Man, work or play, it is without fear of God, or regard to him, or his command, *Rom. 3. 18, There is no fear of God before their eyes.*

3. Their religious actions; when they do their best, and are engaged in Gods service, *Prov. 15. 8, The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination;* be the sacrifice what it will, whatever he bring: *How much more, when he brings it with an evil mind? i. e. as coming from him, there is no good in it; especially, when he brings it with an evil intention; as all Jeroboams sacrifices were but a trick of policy. Incense is an abomination, &c. I hate, I despise your feast-days (though such as God himself had appointed). And I will not smell in your solemn assemblies: though you offer me burnt-offerings, and your meat-offerings, I will not accept them, neither will I regard it, Isa. 1. 13. Amos 5. 21, 22, you may see what was the matter, v. 24, Let judgment run down as water, and righteousness as a mighty stream.* Here was truth and righteousness wanting, which God calls for; they were only religious in ceremony, and Morally profane.

Qu. 3. Seeing all the wor's of a natural man, are not alike abominable, but some in themselves, some relatively, and with other respects; which are they that are most evil?



*Answ.* To mention some.

1. Such as are most directly opposite to God, as Atheism and Idolatry; either not owning of God, or owning a false God for the true; or worshipping the true, with a false, meer invented worship. You know that Commandment, where God says he is jealous: *I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, &c. Exod. 20. 5.* God says, *Judah had fretted him in all these things: and that she should not commit this lewdness above all her abominations. Ezek. 16. 43,* You may easily see what it speaks of.

2. Those which are most directly contrary to the great Commandment: What is the first and great Commandment? *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind: This is the first and great Commandment, Mat. 22. 36, 37, 38.* Malice then against God, and his ways must needs be one of the greatest evils: when Men set themselves against God, on purpose to do him a displeasure (if they could), and sin not barely by reason of pleasure or profit in the Temptation. When Men would crucifie Jesus Christ afresh, if he were in the World again: they do as much as in them is, *Heb. 6. 6. ἀνασταύρωσας ἐνυλοῖς, Crucifie him to themselves, or in themselves.* It is true, there is malice and hatred in every Man, naturally against God: But this is rather Diabolical, improved, and heightened.

3. Those sins which have most of Will in them. As God values the good actions of Men according to their Wills: *If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath,*

*bath*, 2 Cor. 8. 12, so the bad actions of Men; and good reason: For the Will is more than half, because it is the Commanding-faculty; the Understanding indeed is the guiding-faculty: but the Understanding it self shall not consider, unless the Will please. *Joh. 5. 40, Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life.* The Jews pretended a great deal of love to God: but Jesus Christ his only Son they would not own; and what was the matter? They had no heart to such a contemptible Saviour as they thought him: Will was not at home (as they say) and that was the reason: therefore they could not understand his saying, *Joh. 8. 43, Why do ye not understand my speech? even, because ye cannot hear my word.* Why could they not? Because they had no heart to be convinced of the truth of such a Saviour, they had such an inveterate prejudice against him; therefore Christ tells them plainly, whatever they pretended of love to God, *They were of their Father the Devil, for his lusts they would do*, v. 44. Sins of passion and infirmity are less, and *in tantum* diminished; but sins of will and wilfulness make a people Brass and Iron, *Jer. 6. 28.* A man is according to his will, and his actions are according to himself.

4. Such sins as are most against Conscience, and Conviction, *Joh. 19. 11, Therefore he which delivered me unto thee, hath the greater sin, i. e. Judas: If I had not come amongst them, they had not had sin, Joh. 15. 22. i. e. no sin in comparison:* Sins of ignorance, incogitancy, or inadvertency. (When Men either know not, or consider not, or mind not themselves) are of a more tolerable

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construction; sins of daily incurſion, as Divines call them. *Heb. 10. 26, If we ſin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more ſacrifice for ſin, i. e. after we know this Jeſus to be the only true Meſſias, and yet reject him, utterly reject Jeſus Chriſt; and there is no other ſacrifice for ſin: The reaſon why theſe ſins are greater, is becauſe they ſpeak more oppoſition unto, and rebellion againſt God, than ſins of another Nature, Luk. 12. 47, He that knew his Lords will, and did not accordingly, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes.*

5. Such as oppoſe God in his great deſign. Now what is the great deſign of God, but to glorifie his Grace in his Son? *To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be made known by the Church, the manifold wiſdom of God, Eph. 3. 10.* and what is that? *According to the eternal purpoſe which he purpoſed in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, v. 11.* That which croſſes God in his greateſt deſign, is therefore a ſin of the greateſt Nature; oppoſition to God in the way of his Goſpel, this is that which ruined the Jews, *Rom. 11. 20, Becauſe of unbelief they were broken off; and will be the certain ruine of every particular perſon, Joh. 3. 19, This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkneſs rather than light: Matt. 21. 44, Whoſoever ſhall fall on this ſtone, ſhall be broken: but on whomſoever it ſhall fall, it will grind him to powder.* Neglecting will do it, *Heb. 2. 3, How ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect,* much more oppoſe. There is nothing in the World more oppoſed than this: and nothing will  
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sooner ruine the World, than this opposition.

Qu. 4. *What are the grounds and foundations of this position; That a natural Man's works are all abominable?*

*Ground 1.* Because all those works which are directly against Command, whether sins of commission, or omission, they are simply bad, and in their own Nature so, without any consideration of, or respect unto another thing. Some things are evil, because they have an evil end, or at best no good one; but these are without any such consideration, bad in the very object and matter; the very object being a thing forbidden: *v. gr.* To approach to another Mans wife, or any person not in conjugal relation, is evil: because that very person is forbid me. So to tell a lie, whatever end I propound, (though to save a Person from death, a Town from destruction, a Soul from hell, &c.) is evil: because the very matter of a falsehood is forbidden. Nothing but *Naboth's* vineyard would content *Ahab*; but this was evil, because expressly forbidden: *Thou shalt not covet*: and peculiarly, the *Jews* were prohibited to alienate their inheritance.

*Ground 2.* All other works of a natural Man, which are not in themselves evil; yet are so upon divers other respects and considerations: Some, and but some of which we can here mention.

I. Because in doing them, they propound to themselves such ends as are evil, which ends are forbidden (though the things themselves not), and that makes them evil, and abominable; even every

every work of their hand, natural, civil, and religious actions too.

i. Natural and civil actions (which I put together, because of their like indifferent Nature in themselves; being neither good nor bad, but as they are used) are evil from the ends for which men do them, *ex. gr.* (to keep to what I mentioned) when a man eats, and drinks merely to gratifie his inordinate desire, or evil concupiscence: this Mans action is abominable, *Eph. 2. 3*, this is *fulfilling the desire of the flesh, and of the mind, i. e.* as I take it, of a fleshly mind; which is only taken up with the things of the flesh, and such as corrupt Nature prompts them to. This is to serve sin, because it is obeying it in the lusts thereof. *Rom. 6. 6, 12*. Lusts, or inordinate desire, are in themselves sin; and to drive on designs to gratifie them, is to serve sin: though eating and drinking be not forbidden; yet to eat to such an end is forbidden, as the lust it self. I might also instance in working, trading, &c. when it is only to gratifie (I say not to satisfie, for there is no satisfaction to any lust; they that sin most, would more, if they could) a covetous humour, or an inordinate desire of the things of this World.

2. In Religious actions an evil end propounded, as to the main, spoils all, and makes them abominable. So Preaching, *not to serve our Lord Jesus, but our own belly, Rom. 16. 18*, is an evil action. So Preaching Christ for contention, *Phil. 1. 15*. Prayer, fasting, alms-deeds to be seen of men, are all evil, *Matt. 6. Simulata pietas, duplex iniquitas*. To hear, as *Ezekiel's* hearers, merely to gratifie their fancy, as Men would hear a Song from him



him who hath a pleasant voice, *Ezek. 33. 32*, this spoils all hearing. Or,

II. Because they propound not to themselves ends high enough, and good enough, *i. e.* spiritual ends; though naturally good ends. So to eat, drink, and work, meerly propounding to themselves a natural welfare, or meer outward prosperity, for their end (to heep up the body in plight, and the estate in good condition), this, though it be not simply bad, yet it hath nothing of spiritual good in it: The ends are not high enough, therefore the action is abominable. *When ye did eat, did ye not eat for your selves? and when ye did drink, did ye not drink for your selves? and when ye did fast, did ye not fast for your selves? Zach. 7. 5, 6, Did ye at all fast to me, even to me.* So, if a Man keep a natural Fast, only for his health; it is all one: a Man may make himself a subordinate end; but not his last end. For men to eat, and aim no higher, is next to the Hogs eating Acrons. So in religious actions, to propound ends below the business, and the nature of Christianity, makes them evil. See *Zach. 7. 5. Isa. 58. 6, 7.* especially consult *Zach. 7. 7. Should ye not hear the words which the Lord hath cryed by the former Prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited, and in prosperity? q. d.* You are below the business of a Fast: Though you have kept up this ceremony this Seventy years, *i. e.* you are an unhumbed, unreformed people still; almost as far from the reformation the former Prophets called for, as ever you were, &c. Suppose God should expostulate with many of us here; ye have heard one day after another, but what are ye the nearer?

er? the nearer God, the nearer Salvation, the nearer the ends of your hearing? are you not as much strangers to your selves, your own corruptions, and Jesus Christ, as if ye had never heard? Would not this quite blank us, and make us self-condemned?

*Ground 3.* Because they have no regard to manner or circumstances, inward or outward. The body and the carcase of a duty serves turn, without any soul; hearing, though without any consideration, without understanding, without profit. If their Prayers were Anatomized, they were all words, and phrases; voice, and gesture; no heart, no life; without any sincere desire, faith, or affection. Their Thanks-givings (as some are very full of their God-be-thanked) are without any resentment of his kindness, or admiration of his goodness to them. So for outward manner: All Companies are alike to them; offend or offend not, all is one to them. They are without mean or measure, any further than what comports with Credit, or Purse, &c. All times are alike: If they work not on the Lords-day, they can make it holy-day to recreate themselves; or at best, idle it away.

*Ground 4.* Because all their doings are without faith, and its concomitants, *Therefore they are abominable: for without faith, it is impossible to please God, Heb. 11. 6.* Why so? Because without Christ it is impossible to please him. God is pleased with no sinner out of Christ. So again, *They that are in the flesh cannot please God, Rom. 8. 8. i. e.* In a state of corrupt nature, or unsanctified. The reasons of this conclusion, partly are

are in the sixth and seventh Verses, *They that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh.* And they cannot mind both: *They cannot serve God and Mammon,* Matt. 6. 24. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be; So then, Ver. 8, *They that are in the flesh, cannot please God.* They are without any true love of God: and they that love not; all their works must needs be abominable; unless we can imagine God to be taken with a meer out-side.

This evidences the state of every natural Man to be bad, and by no means to be rested in. That must needs be a bad state; wherein he cannot please God. Who can think of resting in such a condition, wherein the Lord of heaven and earth, of salvation and damnation, is against him? What a strange creature is Man, that can please himself in that estate, wherein he cannot please God? May be you never thought so much; it is now high time then to bethink your selves: Suppose the King of *England* should say, so long as ever any of my Subjects stay in *France*; whatever they pretend they do for me, I take nothing well; but they shall be proceeded against as Rebels, and Traitors. Would not this make them hasten their escape? *De te tabula narratur*, the moral belongs to thee.

2. This may be conviction to us, that our own works cannot save us: For if every work of our hand be abominable, from one to another, even the best we can do; then sure they cannot save us. Would any Man go about to obtain the favour of a Prince, by a stinking Present? *So is this*

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people, and so is this nation, and so is every work of their hands, Hagg. 2. 14. They cannot change our state neither: For bad works cannot make us good; though it is true, God in and by these, makes new creatures. This is not to take us off from doing what is good; but from taking up with our doings; or ever hoping, without special grace, to come into a better state.

3. If all the works of a natural Man, even the best, are abominable; then what are the worst? If abominable when he keeps the Sabbath: what when he breaks it? If hearing will not do: what if he neglect, or contemn and hate the light? If reading will not do, what is affected ignorance? If eating and drinking, in the natural Man be abominable, (as formerly explained) what is excess? If working moderately be a sin; what, when you spend all your time and strength upon it, and have no reserve for God? If a moral seriousness will not do; what then is ranting and revelling?

*Object.* 1. *If all we do be bad and abominable; what need we care what we do?*

*Ans.* I have all a-long carried it, you know, so as to clear it, That all works are not alike bad, though the best abominable in a natural Man. This may be caution enough to take heed of being positively wicked; especially, Men should be afraid of being over-wicked, lest they provoke God to their sudden ruine and destruction. *Be not over wicked: For why shouldest thou dye before thy time? Eccles. 7. 17.*

*Object.*

Object. 2. *If so, that all is abominable, we are undone, we cannot help our selves.*

*Answ.* This is the very complaint God would bring us to; that we are undone, and can do nothing but undo our selves: That so we may from the sense of this, look after the remedy. The salvation of the Messias answers all, *Luk. 19. 10, Christ came to seek, and to save that which was lost.* Not only to save, but to seek, and to save those that cannot find the way to the fold. *The Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by the faith of Jesus might be given to them which believe, Gal. 3. 22.* The Promise, *i. e. I will be to thee a God, Gen. 17. 7.* Which hath Heaven in it, and all things. The Law is revealed, and this Doctrine Preached to this purpose, that thou maist be beaten out of that conceit, that thou canst save thy self by thy works (for the Law is every ones first husband, *Rom. 7. 1, &c.*) and become a very Beggar. When thou art come hither, thou art in the way to be found.

Quest. *But must we, or can we do nothing towards helping our selves out of this misery?*

*Answ.* Yea, something you may, something you can, and something you must do. If thou art a sensible sinner, thou art now in the pit of noise, as *David* calls it, *Psal. 40. 1.* But thou must not lye there, and cry God help, only. Thou art an unbeliever; therefore thou sayest, thou wilt not hear. But *Faith comes by hearing, Rom. 10. 17.* When they heard these words, the Holy-ghost fell



upon them which heard, Acts 10. 44. There is no unbeliever, that comes to hear, can tell, but he may go away a Believer. Now, if ever, thou hadst need to hear, especially what the Gospel says, and what is the good news unto the world, by Jesus Christ. *To him give all the Prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins, Vers. 43.*

2. Consider, and meditate; What is a Man profited, if he hear that which is able to save his soul, if he never regard when he hath heard it? *Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard; lest at any time we should let them slip, Heb. 2. 1. And Vers. 3, it is added, How shall we escape, if we neglect, &c?* If you have had never such discoveries of God made to you in hearing, and you presently forget, *as those which look in a glass, &c. Jam. 1. 24.* What are you the better? I am not willing to insist further; but conclude with this: That a natural Man may use all outward means, which God hath appointed.

CHAP. VII.

**T** *Here is none that doth good.*

I come now to the last clause, *There is none, &c.* This seems very strange; especially to some. Were it not Scripture, we should presently deny it with a great deal of confidence: But you see it is exprefs; The words are a proposition in themselves. I shall presently therefore apply my self to it.

Obfer. 7. *There's none that doth good, i. e. there is never a natural Man in the World that doth good, any good; for it is indefinite.*

Where observe, the subject is the natural Man; for else, there are Thousands, and Ten thousand, do good, being first made good. For the clearing the proposition, we shall distinguish of good.

*Distinction* 1. Good is either moral, or spiritual. Moral good, is when a Man hath virtuous acts, and virtuous habits; but all lead him not unto God. A man may have all the cardinal virtues, as they call them, and yet not one dram of grace. See an instance, *Mat. 11. 25, I thank thee, O father, Lord of heaven and earth; because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent.* Concerning the same, or the like persons, he says *they tithe mint, and annise, and cummin, and omit the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith, Matt. 23. 23.*

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Why, what is the difference? What need you be so curious? because things which are so differing in Nature, must be distinguished (or else let us confound all things): especially, because they much deceive men; or rather they deceive themselves by them.

*Diff. 1.* The one is acquired, the other infused. A man may grow a temperate Man, that hath been very extravagant; a prudent Man, that hath been foolish enough: yet all this while far enough from God, or true grace. The other is infused, *Jam. 1. 17, Every good, and every perfect gift ἀνωθεν ἐστὶ κατεβαίνον* is from above, coming down from the father of lights. It is as God gives to every Man, *1 Cor. 3. 5. It is revealed to them, viz. to babes, Matt. 11. 25.* God from above doth *infundendo creare*, and so *de novo creare*, create by infusing, and so a-new create.

*Diff. 2.* There are *semina virtutum in natura*, seeds of virtue in Nature: but no such matter in the other. Fortitude, and Prudence also, may depend much upon a good temper, and so may temperance too; when a man shall be never the more religious, or minding of God in any of all these. No, *Not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God, Joh. 1. 13.* It is not from the facility of one mans temper, or from the heroicalness of anothers. Every thing is excluded but God himself, and those things which men expressly contend for.

*Diff. 3.*

Diff. 3. The virtuous Man aims only at his *bene beateque vivere*, living well and happily: or something that may gratifie Self in some kind or other; but the Christian eyes God. Moses had respect unto him that was invisible, *Heb. 11. 27*, And none of us (saith the Apostle) *liveth to himself*, *Rom. 14. 7*. Though, therefore a man may do that kind of good, yet spiritual good he neither doth, nor hath. For the manifesting of it let's enquire a little (as our short discourse will admit) into the Nature of spiritual good: And pray mind what Scripture calls so, *Job 34. 4, 9*, Let us know amongst our selves what is good: for Job hath said, *it is unprofitable to delight in the Almighty*. Here you see, delight in the Almighty is one of the species, or kinds of good. *Mic. 6. 8*, He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God? Here good is explained by its cause. What doth the Lord require of thee? and by its species, to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly. There is many a Man that doth Justice, and Mercy, but loves neither; much less, walks humbly: for commonly it is *his Jothadivai*, to be seen of men, *Mat 6*. The spiritual Man is described, *Eccles. 2. 26*, One that is good in his sight: A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, *Luk. 6. 45*. The nature of spiritual good is, *fieri ex interno principio*, to proceed from an inward principle; that with a Divine naturalness, carries a Man God-ward. Thus no natural Man doth good, any good; these, or such like. To clear it in particulars.

1. The two great Commandments of the Law, they cannot keep, upon which all the other hang and depend. Therefore they can do no good.

1. *Diliges dominum Deum tuum, &c. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, &c.* This is the first and great Commandment. He can do any thing but love God; he may bring his sacrifice every Morning, as the ten Tribes in their revolt, &c. *Amos 4. 4,* Be very diligent, and observant as to particulars. But this poses him, *Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.* Some idol of Mammon, or pleasure is in his heart, *1 Joh. 2. 16. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life are of the world.* The natural inventions of their heart: *Acorruptelis hominum ir-regenitorum,* from the corruptions of unregenerate Men; *Dixon.* One of these are their Idols. They that were reconciled to God, were first Enemies, *Rom. 5. 10.* And can an Enemy love with all his heart?

2. *Non concupisces:* Thou shalt not covet: This he cannot keep; he may keep his hand off, or his eye possibly, but not his heart; for the heart of Man is desperately wicked, *Jer. 17. 9, Fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind, Eph. 2. 3.* Whom doth the Apostle I speak this of, but himself, and all others while unregenerate, as is manifest in the context?

2. They have no love to the person of a Mediator, as he is naturally a meer stranger to Men in the notion; so when known, he is more abhorred. He is one *whom man despiseth, whom the nation abhorreth;* even the professing Nation, *Isa. 49. 7.* Christ tells the Jews: *Now ye have both*



both seen, and hated both me and my father, Joh. 15. 24. If they had naturally any love to God or him, they could not have been at this rate.

3. They have no admiration or acceptance of the righteousness of the Gospel. What is that? imputed righteousness, though always accompanied with inherent, 1 Cor. 1. 23, *We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness.* None receive him but such as are born of God, *To as many as received him, &c.* Who were born again, Joh. 1. 12, 13. What natural Man looks after the righteousness of the Gospel? Or when do you hear him complain for want of Faith?

4. To have done: What hungriings and thirstings have they after communion with God? Where do you find a Man troubling himself about any such thing, but one whom God hath awakened, and thoroughly wrought upon? They can live without God in the world, Eph. 2. 12. It is only the sanctified that have fellowship with the father, and with his son Jesus Christ: Others are strangers to it, 1 John 1. 3.

*Distinct.* 2. Good is materially, or formally so; and so is doing good. When the thing is done, or not done, which God commands, or forbids, there is good materially; but when so done, or omitted, as he requires, this is the very formality of a good action.—*Forma dat esse*, naturally; and so it is in Morals and Spirituals. Matter without form is nothing; if never so fair Effigies of a Man, but no soul, there is no Man, but the picture of a Man. Let the matter of the thing

you do, be what God commands, and never so exactly done, as to the outward form: yet, if that *ἐνδὲν ἡ*, that *aliquid intus*, or inward Principle be wanting, Faith, and Love, whence it should proceed according to that Scripture, *Luke 6. 45, A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good*; it is nothing in Gods account. Let a Man do what he can in that kind, yet in the proper notion of Scripture, he is not said to do any good, *Jer. 13. 23, No more can ye do good, that are accustomed to do evil*. No? there is many a Man that hath very evil customs, that yet can do many a thing for matter good; yet properly he does no good in Scripture account, *Rom. 7. 21, When I would do good, says Paul, evil is present*. What is the good he would do? He would do what he does with the best and purest will and affection: but this he cannot, *evil is present*, and hinders him, *1 John 3. 7, He that doth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous*. What doth the Apostle mean, when he is giving a plain character of the Children of God? as you may see *v. 10*. What, shall we put in here for such, all that hand over-head, hap-hazard, they know not why, nor wherefore, do that which is materially good? No, the Philosopher must qualifie his morals better than so; *ἐὰν ἐνδὲς, ἐὰν προαιρέματος*, &c. It is with mind, and heart; will, and affection; purpose, and intention; aim, and indeavour: Let this be made good of a natural Man, and then we will say, He doth good: shall I again prove it? Have I not said enough under the former distinction? Or doth not the very explication, with a little

little reflection upon common experience, shew, that every natural Man falls under this condemnation, *He doth no good?*

Quest. 1. *Why do they not do good? I shall satisfy this by making and answering several queries very briefly?*

Ans. 1. Because they will not, *quia nolunt*, as *Aug. i. e.* the immediate cause of evil action in the general, or of their not doing good, is want of will. Will is against it; set upon its wickedness. *The heart of man is desperately wicked, Jer. 17. 9. And how can ye which are evil, speak good? Is Christs Logick, Matt. 12. 33, and we may say, do good.*

Quest. 2. *Why do they not will good?*

Ans. Because they cannot. *Joh. 6. 44, No man can come unto me, &c.* Absolute impotency to one spiritual Act, speaks an impotency to all of the same Nature. For if, because they are spiritual, he cannot; then he cannot any, for the same reason. *A quatenus ad omne.*

Quest. 3. *Why can they not?*

Ans. Because they have lost their ability.

Qu. 4. *Why? have they lost their free-will?*

Ans. Not natural free-will, but natural free-will was never their ability to spiritual good; but Righteousness, or the Image of God: For it is not *velle bonum*, but *bene velle bonum*, to will good, but well to will good, which is good in  
our

our sense, and in account of Scripture; which free-will never attained to, but by the Image of God, or the benefit of righteousness, which it had before the fall, and hath now lost. *Rom. 6. 20, When ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness: and when was that? before conversion, verse 17, God bethanked ye were the servants of sin; but now have obeyed, &c.*

*Quest. 5. But why is not this cured?*

*Answ. 1.* No question, every Man shall be found guilty in neglecting himself, and the means of cure : But

2. To answer as some do, \*that they are not cured, because they will not be cured; is no reason in my apprehension; for the will to be cured is the main cure. And therefore, it is as much as to say; they are not cured, because they are not cured, *i. e.* simply, and truly to will grace. Can this be the reason, when it holds in every Man? no Man would be cured naturally: therefore, if this be the reason, no Man ever should be cured. What is the reason then, that many notwithstanding their unwillingness are cured, but the will and good pleasure of God?

*Object. Then God is the cause.*

*Answ.* No culpable cause: unless you will make God bound to every wretched sinner. Is God bound to every wicked creature, that willingly and wilfully undoes himself?

*Consect. 1.* Then men must expect no good. For consider, it is *well done good and faithful servant,*

count, Matt. 25. 21. Heaven in Scripture is called a reward, Col. 3. 24, *The reward of the inheritance*: And therefore it presupposes works, though it be not for work. I find heaven is looked upon as a reward of remunerative Justice, even by the best propugners of the most free Grace; though this be in and by virtue of Christ, and his merits. Therefore such as can do no good, cannot expect any good, nor can any give an account of his relation to Christ, that hath not a working faith in his heart, Gal. 5. 6. chap. 6, 7.

2. This does quite unhinge and unbottom a natural Man, and takes him all to pieces; dissolves and destroys all his works, and brings them to nothing. Where now is all that ever you did? what is become of all your sabbath-days? your closet-prayers? your alms? your compassionate visits? If thou art a natural Man, they have wanted their life, and soul; and have been done but as a meer Heathen might have done them, or many a Christian in the visible Church, that shall never come into Gods joy; if this will not debase you, I know not what will.

3. Then also, they must become good, before they do good, *de futuro*, for the future. *Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?* Mat. 7. 16. Will you count your selves Christians, because you bear leaves, or such wildings as a heathen may do? you must be good trees, else you will never bring forth good fruit. I expect to hear no good of those, that look not after regeneration, and recovery of the Image of God. You will be but like stakes in a hedg, and farther from good seven years hence, than ever.

4. This



4. This may turn for a testimony to Gods people, If no natural Man do good, *i. e.* spiritually good, formally good, properly good, with mind, and heart, will and affection, and make it his design and business so to do; then those who so do, are crept out of the common condition of *Adam's* posterity; and partake of the virtues and graces of the second *Adam*, *Jesus Christ*. For *he that doth righteousness, is righteous, even as he is righteous: In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the Devil,* 1 Joh. 3. 7. and verse 10. Thou mayst expect to hear; *Euge bono servo, well done good servant.*

Thus you have briefly seen in this verse, how a natural Man is lost by his bad works; and lost by his best; abominable, and can do no good. I would have every sensible sinner, that knows what I say, remember that *Jesus Christ came to seek and save that which was lost.* Luk. 19. 10. He came to seek *Zaccheus*, as well as save him. But take heed of resting in a separate-Christ, or a Christ without appropriation and application. *He must dwell in your heart by faith,* Eph. 3. 17.

## P S A L. XIV. 2.

*The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men; to see if there were any that did understand and seek God.*  
 vers. 3, *They are all gone aside.*

## CHAP. VIII.

**I**N this second Verse, we have 1. Gods inquisition; *The Lord looked down from heaven, &c.* 2. The general object of this inquisition, *upon the children of men.* 3. The special matter, or the main thing he inquires into, *To see if there were any that did understand and seek God.* 4. The result of this inquiry, *They are all gone aside.*

To make way for observation: I shall first facilitate the sense unto you. God is here compared to one on the higher ground, or in a watch-tower, that sets himself on purpose to take a full and exact view of things. *The Lord looked down from heaven.* Though God be every where, yet he is said to be there in special, where he doth most manifest himself. *Gen. 28. 16, Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not, says Jacob; is in this place,*

*Place*, i. e. in peculiar manner, manifesting himself. So *Psal.* 46. 5, *God is in the midst of her*, i. e. in a special manner present, *Ezek.* 48. 35, *And the name of the city from that day shall be, the Lord is there, Jehovah Shammah*: Which, because he doth in a most glorious manner in Heaven; he is therefore said to be there most emphatically. And here it is most properly accommodated to the case in hand.

*Upon the children of men, &c.* The children of Adam, and who are they, but all, and every Man?

*To see*, i. e. to see exactly, or make most special Observation. For mark, he looks *to see*; as when a man doth most intently fix his eyes to behold.

*If there were any*, any in particular, any amongst the whole multitude and generality.

*Did understand and seek God.* It is not so much, what they are, as to their *& cetera*, in their Seculars; But how they stand affected towards him.

*Obser.* 1. God takes exact notice, (*he looks to see*) of all, and every Son and Daughter of Adam, how they stand affected towards him.

Where we have asserted.

1. Gods Providence, his Observation, or notice-taking. God hath not left the earth, or the care of it; though he is said peculiarly (as before) to be in heaven, *Psal.* 11. 4, *His eyes behold, his eyelids try the children of men.* *Prov.* 15. 3, *The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.*

2. That this is an exact and unerring Providence, that cannot be mistaken, as of one that sees from

from a mountain, to whom all is exposed. *Heb. 4. 13, All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do: Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: Creature of the heart, as I remember Mr. Dike expounds it, 1 Kings 8. 39, For thou only knowest the hearts of all the children of men, as elsewhere it is said, His eyes are upon their ways, Job 24. 23.*

3. That it is an universal Providence over all; upon the children of men, *Gen. 6. 12. God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt: for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And vers. 5. God saw that every imagination of the thought of his heart, was only evil continually.*

4. Though it be universally; yet it is as particular over every Man, as if conversant about him alone. *Jer. 17. 10, I the Lord search the heart, to give every man according to his deeds. There's but one Lot in Sodom, and he takes notice of him, to deliver him.*

5. That it is a most special Providence, in relation to spirituals. It is whether they understand, or seek God. To know what men are towards him, and in relation to their last and main end. *He beholds the evil and the good, Prov. 15. 3, as evil or good. Prov. 16. 2, All the ways of man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weighs the spirits.*

*Demonstr. 1.* Else how should God, as Sovereign govern all things? To govern, is to rule and order things, so as to bring them to their proper end. *God made all things for himself, Prov. 16. 4. And he must needs know how all things tend to this end.*

*Demonstr. 2.*

*Demonstr.* 2. Else, how should God judg the World in righteousness? *He hath appointed a day in which he will judg the world*, and that in righteousness, *Acts* 17. 31. And how can this be, unless he have an exact knowledg! How should every Man have according to his deeds? See *Rom.* 2. 6, 7, 8. *Jer.* 17. 10.

*Demonstr.* 3. Else, how should Man know his own heart: which is necessary to set him in the way of salvation. He must see he is wrong, before he can be right. How could the Word discover the heart, and the very secrets of it, unless there were a Director and Supervisor? See *I Cor.* 14. 24, 25. *Heb.* 4. 12.

*Quest.* 1. *But why is this enquiry, how they are affected towards him?*

*Ans.* 1. Because God made Man to know, and love him. God planted affections in Man indeed, whereby he might love, and affect other things also; but nothing as himself, nor any thing as his happiness: Therefore it is, he looks after this, as the law of the creature; and as necessary to Mans end. God never intended Man a time in the World, wherein he gives license of estrangement from himself.

2. Because Redemption by Christ, in part consists in repairing and restoring Man to this good affection toward himself. *1 Pet.* 1. 18, *Forasmuch as ye know; ye were not redeemed with corruptible things from your vain conversation: See Rom.* 8. 29. *Tit.* 2. 14. Therefore God so looks after this  
(see-



(seeing we have fallen from our creation) as implying our Redemption.

*Quest. 2. But doth God know every degree of our affection towards him; how little, or how much?*

*Ans. Yea, every degree; the secret of the heart, and the depth of the heart. Joh. 2. ult. He knew what was in man, i. e. whatever. Joh. 21. 17, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. The question was put comparatively, Vers. 15, Lovest thou me more than these? Christ could testifie of the Woman, She loved much, Luk. 7. 47.*

1. It is well then, for Gods people that he knows, and knows exactly, how they are affected towards him; not only against the reproaches of the World, but the clamours of the Devil, and their own heart. *He knoweth the way that I take, and when he hath tryed me, I shall come forth as gold, Job 23. 10.* It was *Jobs* comfort, against the imputation of his friends, who counted him an hypocrite.

2. It is comfort, in that he knows how little, or how much they are affected to him. He can reveal their righteousness to them, as well as their unrighteousness; their wants and defects. He can read the mystery of their heart to them, and shew them wherefore he contendeth with them; and make up all when he hath done.

3. This Doctrine is the bane of security. How should this affright every sinner! Thou art discovered: the eyes of the Lord are upon thee. It is in vain, for men to promise themselves exemption in sinning: It is not Chamber-walls; or Curtains night; or darkness

ness will shrowd from him. *Adam where art thou?* Gen. 3. 9, Is enough to scare every sinner, though in the Thickets. Imagine one working Treason against his Prince, while he stands and looks on.

4. It is in vain also, for men to deceive themselves with pretences and excuses. Almost every one pretends to love God; but he sees exactly through all these fig-leaves. If thou turnest thy self, and think God sees thee not, because thou settest not thy self in his presence; art thou not therefore in his presence? God knows thee as exactly, as if thy very skin was pul'd off, and thy heart anatomized, according to the allusion, *Heb. 4. 13.*

5. This adds further weight to the sinners load: For if God have such an exact providence, and all-knowledg; without doubt, he is as Omnipotent, as Omniscient. These two cannot be separate: The same excellency must have both; he is as able to hamper thee, and bring thee to judgment, with every secret thing.

6. Be exhorted therefore no longer to deceive thy self. God knows you infinitely better, than you know your selves: No question you know much, by your selves: (*For who knows the things of man save the spirit of man which is in him? 1 Cor. 2. 11.*) Much more does God know, that hath his eye every moment upon thy heart. What a woful thing then, is self-security? It's only to keep quiet in the House, while the Devil possesses it. *But be not deceived, God is not mocked, Gal. 6. 7.* And when is a Man deceived? *If a man thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing; he deceives himself, ver. s. 3* of all cheats the worst.

There-

Therefore be not satisfied, till you know whether you be truly affected towards God, or no.

*Quest. How should we know that?*

*Ans.* 1. Affection is a stirring thing: though affection here implies knowledg, or presupposes it; yet that very knowledg is operative. It is easie to know, whether thou hast any motion or affection towards God or no. How the heart moves, and stirs towards creatures, it is obvious, and easie to know, by that Man that observes himself; and why not towards God?

*Object. But it is hard to know the sincerity of our affections, and motions, whether they be in truth.*

*Ans.* *Valeat negative*; It's negatively true. When Men find no affection for God, no heart, no motions, nor stirrings towards him; (suppose body and mind in good frame, which is here to be supposed: For otherwise, there are some as dead towards other things, as they are to God) we may justly question, whether there be any thing: *Modus sequitur ad rem.* If there be no such thing; then in vain do we enquire of the sincerity of it.

2. Affection if sincere, it is not only for common Providences. It is not only because he hath made thee, feeds thee, and clothes thee, that thou lovest him; as you know the Devil objected in the case of *Job*, *Job* 1. 9, 10, *Doth Job serve God for nought, &c.* Though Gods People may, and ought to be affected with all his goodness, in the way of common Providence; yet if this be all, this is no good affection.

3. When God and thy prosperity are divided, at least abstracted in thy thoughts; how is it then? If thou canst bless thy self in the Lord, as the Psalmist, *Psal. 16. 5, 6, The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance: The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage:* Then thou hast a test of thy sincerity; when thou canst love God for himself, and his grace revealed in the Gospel.

4. Affection is a leading thing. If thou hast a good affection towards God, especially that of love (which is mainly here meant) it is a ring-leader of many other. Then thou hast longings and breathings: *Oh when wilt thou come unto me? Psal. 101. 2. Oh! when shall I come and appear before God, Psal. 42. 2. Mourning, and sorrow in his absence: Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled, Psal. 30. 7. Joy and praise in his presence: O Lord my God, I will give thanks to thee for ever, v. ult, Psal. 4. 6.*

5. Affection is an active thing. *John 14. 21. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth, 1 Joh. 5. 3. And this is love, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous, i. e. unto love: For what love doth, it doth with delight. It will creep, where it cannot go. It puts thee upon a sincere evangelical obedience.*

6. And Lastly, It is uniform. Every thing that is from a friend, we have a respect for. If thou hast an affection for God; thou hast an affection for every thing of God. Wilt thou say, thou lovest God, and hatest his Ordinances? Lovest God, and hatest his People; his Pictures? Lovest God,

God, and hatest his Word? Or lovest his Word, and hatest his Commandments? Or lovest one Commandment, and hast no respect for another? Or are Commandments good, and Promises not precious? Or all Promises good, and Commandments bad in thine eyes? Affection to God, implies affection towards all that is good; *argumento a majori*, by an argument from the greater to the less.

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CHAP. IX.

Verf. 2. **U**Pon the children of men, to see, if there were any that did understand. With verf. 3. They are all gone aside.

We are now come to handle the general, and the special object of this inquisition, both together. Gods inquiry is concerning the Children of Men, whether any did understand. This is resolved, *Verf. 3. They are all gone aside.* And in the Parallel place, *Psal. 53. 3, Every one of them is gone back.* By the Apostle, *Rom. 3. 11, It is put determinately, There is none that understands, there is none that seeketh after God.*

Observ. 9. *There is none of all the Children of Men, that naturally have any true knowledg of God; such as makes them Men of understanding in Gods account. And because this seems either false, or harsh; I shall first, give you the demonstration of it.*



*Demonstr. 1.* If they know God naturally; then they love him. For he that loveth not, knoweth not God, 1 *Joh.* 4. 8. And if so, then they are beloved of him, and that in their naturals. *Joh.* 14. 21, *And he that loveth me, shall be loved of my father, and I will love him.* Contrary to *Ephes.* 2. 3.

*Demonstr. 2.* If they know him, they put their trust in him: for they that know thy name, will put their trust in thee, *Psal.* 9. 20. And if so, then they do sincerely seek him (as in the connection): For, *Thou Lord hast not forsaken them that seek thee.* The consequent will be; That Man naturally seeks God, and that sincerely. Though the world say generally, they trust in God; it is clear they do not. They run the venture and hazard; trust him, but not put their trust in him; but ordinarily live in a tempting of him. And again, if so, they are blessed. *Psal.* 84. 12, *O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee:* Which who dare pronounce of a natural Man?

*Demonstr. 3.* If they know him, they are all Saints naturally; for to know God, is their description. *Heb.* 8. 11, 12, *They shall all know me from the least to the greatest: For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness.* So *Gal.* 4. 9, *But if after ye have known God, &c.* But who will say they are Saints naturally? Saints are such as have made a covenant with God by sacrifice, *Psal.* 50. 5. A covenant with God by Jesus Christ; of whom people are naturally as ignorant as Horses, and as averse to him as Devils.

*Demonstr. 4.* If they know God, it is life-eternal to them. For *this is life-eternal, to know thee, &c. Job. 17. 3.* And then heaven is every ones naturally, by descent; which everts the whole Scripture?

*Demonstr. 5.* If they know him; then they have the Image of God naturally. For the Image of God is in Knowledg, *Col. 3. 10, Renewed in knowledg, after the image of him that created him:* and if so; then every natural Man is an upright honest Man; not only a Moral honest Man, (honest as the world calls them): For the Image of God made Man upright. And then why does the Apostle say, *They were renewed to this,* if it was natural?

*Demonstr. 6.* If they know God naturally; then contraries, and contradictories are true at the same time; as if you should say, a Sun in the firmament, and no Sun. For the Apostle tells the *Ephesians*, chap. 5. 8, *Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord;* absolute darkness without the Lord: And this was universally true of all the gentiles. *Acts 26. 18, To whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light.*

*Demonstr. 7.* If any know naturally, why not all? For if Nature be the cause, it must be a cause in all. But can we give no instances to the contrary? Did Peter know while God revealed? *Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father,* Matt. 16. 17. Did Paul know,

as learned as he was? Nay, is not the whole World, (I mean it, as opposed to Gods people) a most deplorable instance to the contrary? *Joh. 17. 25, O righteous father, the world hath not known thee!*

*Demonstr. 8.* If they know him, how comes the World to be so sinful? *The whole world lies in wickedness, 1 Joh. 5. 19. And omnis peccans est ignorans,* every sinner is an ignorant creature. *He that says, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, 1 Joh. 2. 4.* The Apostle counts, and calls all the world wicked; though it be at a more sober rate than in our Times.

*Demonstr. 9.* If they know God; then heart, and affections, and all the train of them are for God, for they follow Knowledg. Why does a man love any thing, desire any thing, delight in any thing that is good, but because he knows it so? And therefore, for such as are converted, God is said *To shine in their heart, 2 Cor. 4. 6, i. e.* so as to engage their love, desire, delight, &c. And they are said, *To understand with their heart, Matt. 13. 15.* If an Hebraism be acknowledged; it will not make against me.

*Demonstr. 10.* If they know God; then God knows them, *cum effectu; i. e.* loves, and delights in them. *O continue thy loving kindness to them that know thee, Psal. 36. 10.*

*Demonstr. 11.* This would null one great end of preach-

preaching: Which is to turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, Acts 26. 18.

To conclude, for I have almost wearied you with Arguments; though I cut them short:

*Demonstr.* 12. If they know; then they are upright excellent persons. *Prov.* 15. 21, *A man of understanding walketh uprightly.* chap. 17. 27, *A man of understanding is of an excellent spirit.* Where is this excellent upright spirit in the World? The contrary, a perverse cross spirit to truth and goodness, is most manifest.

I have been the longer upon this; because we are now upon one of the main parts of this natural Corruption.

*Object.* 1. *But they may know, if they will apply themselves, and give diligence?*

*Ans.* 1. If you mean, they may know by Gods blessing, and inspiration, upon endeavours; we easily grant it: but then it is not to the case the objection means; they are Men of understanding, because they may know naturally, if they will take pains, without the special inspiration of the Almighty.

*Ans.* 2. Where doth Scripture ever say, that they understand, or are Men of understanding spiritually, because they can understand naturally? or in plainer English, that because they have reason, and natural understanding, therefore they are Men of understanding in Gods account, and in the sense of the Text? It is true, men that have

have *potentiam activam*, or *proxime activam*, i. e. which have a mind habitually enlightened by the spirit, are said to understand even then, when they do not actually understand or make use of their knowledg. But for men that have *potentiam mere passivam*, or *obedientialem*, i. e. a power more than a Beast in them to understand, if God enlighten them: I say, where do you find that Scripture owns these for men of understanding?

*Ans.* 3. Where doth Scripture ever say, either in word or sense, that a natural Man can know? The contrary is plainly asserted, 1 Cor. 2. 14, *Neither can he know them*: and who is this? it is a natural Man, *ψυχικὸς ἀνθρώπος*. I know many have endeavoured to make it run the carnal man; and say indeed the carnal man knows not, nor can, i. e. one addicted to his lusts, so long he cannot; because they blind him, but it is *ψυχικὸς* the soulleymen, i. e. the man of the best apprehensions, and most improved intellectuals, so long as he is a natural man: as appears by the opposition. *But he that is spiritual, judgeth all things*; and by the reason given also, *vers. 14, The natural man cannot know, because they are spiritual discerned*, i. e. man must have the teachings of the spirit, and be indued with it, ere he can know them, as *vers. 12*. Besides, I answer, every natural man is a carnal man, i. e. he is all for the interest of flesh, or self; something of self: For *σοφία τῆς σαρκὸς*, *The wisdom of the flesh*, i. e. the best of it is enmity, *Rom. 8. 7*. The best in such a man is mastered, and over-powered. And the Apostle, *vers. 9*. explains, who is a carnal man



man by this: He hath not the spirit; as *Jude* vers. 19. *Sensual, not having the spirit.*

*Answ. 4.* If they may know, if they will, then it seems they are wilfully ignorant, or willingly so. And how can an habitually-wilful-willing-ignorance consist with true saving knowledg, or a power to know? Let the first foundation, or reason of their ignorance be where it will, it seems they are confessedly ignorant; and you say they are willingly so: Then speak whether Scripture ever accounts such to know God, or to be men of understanding. Let's canonize all the World.

*Answ. 5.* The objection must be understood of saving knowledg; or else it signifies nothing at all: for, we deny not unto men power of other knowledg. And if men savingly know God, or can know him; How is it, they are not spiritual, or in an heavenly disposition naturally?

*Answ. 6.* If so, how is it said, that they only learn, whom God teaches? *John 6. 44, No man can come unto me, except the father which hath sent me draw him.* And how doth God draw? to be sure one way (whatever other there be) is by teaching; as it follows vers. 45, *He that hath heard, and learned of the father, comes* And this is the meaning of the promise, *Heb. 8. 11, They shall all know me, &c. i. e. I will teach them, and they shall know me.*

*Object. 2.* *It's true, man cannot of himself know God or his mind, unless he had revealed it: But now*

*now he hath revealed his will, i. e. indited the scriptures, he may know?*

*Answ.* When John Baptist preached, yet he says (as he found by experience in the Jews), *A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven*, John 3. 27. Though revealed and discovered, yet he can receive nothing. When Christ himself preached, the Jews murmur, upon which occasion, says Christ, John 6. 43, *Murmur not amongst your selves: No man can come unto me, except, &c.* v. 44, *It is written in the prophets, they shall be all taught of God*, vers. 45. Though Christ himself preach, there must be hearing, and learning of the Father; be the thing never so clearly revealed, by Christs own mouth.

*Inst. Because they would not?*

*Answ.* I grant they would not; but this is not all, for had they heard, and learned of the Father, they would, therefore they were ignorant and blind, as well as wilful. 1 Cor. 2. 14, *They are all foolishness unto him, neither can he know them.*

*Object. 3. It is true indeed, of our selves we cannot, we must have the aid and assistance of the spirit; or else we cannot?*

*Answ.* 1. But aid, and assistance alone will not do with a natural Man; there must be creation, infusion; therefore God promises when he will convert, *To put his laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts*, Heb. 8. 10. Therefore

fore also the holy Ghost is compared to an unction. *But ye have an unction from the holy one, and ye know, &c.* 1 John 2. 20, 27, *But the anointing, which ye have received of him, abideth in you; and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you, &c. and even as it hath taught you, &c.* And though an unction be outwardly applied to the body; yet here it is only Metaphorical.

*Ans. 2.* What mean you by aid and assistance? If you mean to enlighten the object; to make that more manifest, visible, or intelligible; it is never the more so to a blind eye, he that sees, must have a visive faculty, as well as a manifest object. And he that sees spiritual things, must be spiritually discerning. 1 Cor. 2. 14, 15.

*Ans. 3.* If you mean to enlighten your minds: how should the mind be savingly and habitually enlightned, without a new light infused into it? It is not light meerly, glancing and transient will do it. What if it shine, and leave you in some way of common enlightning; What are you the nearer? Doth the Apostle mean no more by receiving the spirit, *But the anointing which ye have received of him, &c.*? And are they not said to have it? *But ye have an unction from the holy one?* And lastly, It is said to abide in them, in the fore-cited place, 1 John 2. 20, 27.

*Quest. 2. Understand what?*

*Ans.* Any thing that is spiritual, they understand not, either *Idr Qdr n Ia Ic Qdr*, God, or any

any thing divine and spiritual, or of spiritual concernment. To give instance in some things most obvious.

1. They know not sin; understand not it. (Sin, though it be not spiritual, but diabolical; yet to know it, is of spiritual concernment, and there is a spiritual knowledg of it:) however they may find what the lash of it is; That it is evil and bitter, *Jer. 4. 18.* Yet this is to know it, no otherwise than the Devils know it. And what they know this way, is rather from the common work of the Spirit of God convincing, than from natural knowledg. They know nothing of the evil nature of it: And therefore, they would as freely choose it as ever, if they could at as easie a rate.

2. They understand nothing of God. No? Yea sure; they know he is Omniscient, Omnipotent, and what not? But not with any particular knowledg; else they would glorifie him as God: which they do not any more, than the Infidel Gentiles, *Rom. 1. 20, 21.* *O righteous father, the world hath not known thee, Joh. 17. 25.* Their knowledg of God, is rather an *idea*, than real; as if he were *universale*, rather than *singulare individuum*; an universal Nature, rather than a singular Being, that can do them either good or hurt; otherwise his power would terrifie them, his Omniscience scare them, his goodness affect them. The Apostle makes it peculiar to Gods People, to know him, *I write unto you little children, because ye have known the father, 1 Joh. 2. 13.* I omit to speak of Christ, which is more a mystery to a natural Man.

3. They understand not holyness; *i. e.* nothing  
of

of the beauty of it. However they may discourse of the nature of Grace: yet they see not any thing of excellency in it; though they may apprehend something of good in moral virtues. Where was ever greater splendour of holiness, than appeared in Jesus Christ on earth? And if the World were so well inclined to it, (as some Men would make us believe) Jesus Christ should have been wonderfully beloved and admired amongst them; especially by the Pharisees, the great pretenders unto holiness. But what says Christ? *Now have they both seen, and hated both me and my father, Joh. 15. 24.* You may see a second instance in Stephen, (if you please) how mightily the World was enamoured with it, *Act. 7. 55, &c.*

4. And Lastly, It is not any thing they know of this kind. *But the natural man receiveth not the things* (whatever they be) *of the spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, 1 Cor. 2. 14.*

Quest. 3. *What kind of knowledg, or understanding is that the Text speaks of, which is here denied to natural Men?*

*Answ.* I shall lead you to this, by several steps: where you shall see Scripture clearing it self.

1. Sometimes Scripture attributes to Men, knowledge and understanding. *Job 32. 8, There is a spirit in man;* and that is a spirit of understanding. *Prov. 20. 27, The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord.* A Candle serves to manifest something. More fully, *Jud. v. 10, But in what they know naturally, in those things, &c. 1 Cor.*

11. 14,



11. 14, *Doth not even nature it self teach you?* Nature you see teaches something; is sufficient to something. And accordingly, we have no reason to deny to Man, what we grant to Devils.

2. Scripture acknowledges Men may be not only naturally wise, but improved in their knowledge. *Matt. 11. 25, Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent:* Those that were wise, *in rebus cognoscendis*, to know things; Prudent, *in rebus agendis*, in their actings. They may be great Counsellors, States-men, Politicians. *Gamaliel* was known to be a wise, prudent Man, and able to give the whole Senate advice. *Act. 5. 38, Refrain from these men, and let them alone, &c.* So was *Paul*, that was brought up at his feet, even while he was a Pharisee; *Act. 22. 4, Though I have the gift of of prophesy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, 1 Cor. 13. 2.* So that we detract not from mens parts, or learning, where there is real worth; or deny every kind of knowledge to them. They may be learned and prudent Men, fit for business.

3. Scripture grants to all some knowledge of God, even in things spiritual. *That which may be known of God, is manifest in them, Rom. 1. 20. The Gentiles do by nature the things contained in the law, Rom. 2. 14.* Therefore something of the Law they know naturally: Much more may they know in Scripture, and from Scripture; especially under plentiful means. *Rom. 2. 18, And knowest his will. Ver. 20, Which hast the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the Law:* Even such knowledge they may have, as to keep themselves from the gross evils of the World; or in a sense to recover

cover themselves from them. 2 Pet. 2. 20, *If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledg of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. You see, they may know right and wrong, just and unjust; nay, have the knowledg of the Gospel, so as to be much reformed outwardly; yea, they may be enlightned, and tast of the good word of God, &c. Heb. 6. 4, 5.* Therefore, we deny not to natural Men all knowledg of spiritual things, when we say, *There is none that understandeth.*

4. Yet again, there is some kind of knowledg, that Scripture frequently and commonly denies to natural Men; and generally denies them to be Men of understanding in a strict and proper sense. *O righteous father, the world hath not known thee, Joh. 17. 25. And Joh. 14. 17, Whom the world cannot receive: because it sees him not, neither knows him. Deut. 32. 28, 29, For they are a nation void of counsel: neither is there any understanding in them. O that they were wise, that they understood this. Isa. 27. 11, For it is a people of no understanding.* You see this verified generally of the Jews, who had the means of knowledg, and the priviledg of the Oracles of God. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: good understanding have they that do his commandments, Psal. 111. ult.* Therefore they which fear not God, have not so much as the A. B. C. of right knowledg. Hence Scripture commonly gives the Fool to them.

5. Scripture speaks of a peculiar manner of knowing. 1 Cor. 8. 2, *He knows nothing yet as he ought to know, καθὼς δεῖ*, in comparison of which,

it despises and undervalues all the rest as no knowledg. *We know that all have knowledg, q. d.* such as it is; but it is worth little, good for nothing, to any saving, spiritual purpose. *Eph. 4. 20, 21, But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be ye have heard him, and been taught by him as the truth is in Jesus.* This is a special teaching, and learning, which Christ only teaches. *Psal. 119. 34, Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.* What is this? Does David beg teaching of God, and promises and undertakes for all the rest, of himself? No, but he prays for that peculiar manner of teaching, which will enable him to do all, or observe all. *Give me understanding, and I shall, &c.* *Joh. 6. 45, They shall be all taught of God.* Here is a Divine teaching, and learning of spiritual things. All the rest is but humane: This is of God himself.

6. We find Scripture plainly distinguishing of natural knowledg, and spiritual. *Col. 1. 9, That ye may be filled with the knowledg of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.* *1 Cor. 2. 14, For they are spiritually discerned.* *Psal. 119. 18, Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy Law.* Now this special, peculiar, spiritual wisdom and knowledg, is that which the natural Man hath none of. And thus it is true, *There is none that understandeth.* Which that you may the [better understand], we shall briefly explain it, 1. By its Nature. 2. By its Properties.

1. In its Nature. *It is a special light set up in the mind, by the spirit of God, whereby it is elevated,*

vated and inabled to discern, and judge of things spiritual in another manner than any natural man doth, or can do. To explain this.

1. *It is a special light.* Therefore it is called the *Light of the knowledg of the glory of God*, 2 Cor. 4. 6. All Light manifests something, in some manner, as all knowledg does: But this is the light of the knowledg, *i. e.* which so manifests the Glory of God, as no other knowledg doth. Many men have a knowledg of spiritual things, (as I have said before) but not an evidencing, manifesting Light of the glory of them. See Eph. 5. 8.

2. *Set up in the mind, i. e. habitually:* In opposition to some meer passing, transient light; which possibly other men may have. This *abides in them*, 1 Joh. 2. 27. Whereby they are in some measure disposed to judg of things at one time as well as another: Though this alone serves not for actual judgment, and apprehension.

3. *By the spirit of God:* For though there be a spirit in Man; yet the Lord giveth wisdom, out of his mouth cometh knowledg and understanding: he layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous, Prov. 2. 6, 7. It is the anointing teaches, as before, 1 Joh. 2. 27.

4. *Whereby the mind is elevated and inabled.* 1 Cor. 2. 15, *But the spiritual man judgeth all things, i. e. discerneth, q. d. he is in a better capacity, as one in an higher Sphere, where he sees that which no other man sees; which is called The spirit of a sound mind*, 2 Tim. 1. 7. *But now after ye have known God, or rather are known of him; how turn ye again, &c?* Gal. 4. 8, 9.

This is that which makes him wonder, that after they had such advantage from the spirit of better judging, they should recede to poor empty ceremonies, which had nothing in them, &c.

5. *In another manner than, &c. Matt. 15. 14, Let them alone, they are blind, &c.* Christ wonders not that they were offended at his Doctrine, nor did regard, Because they were blind, and not able to judg of such matters. He wonders not, that many of his followers should go back; but if Peter, &c. *Will ye also go away? John 6. 67, But wisdom is justified of her children, Matt. 11. 19. q. d.* They which are wise, and truly spiritual, will be able to make a right judgment of these things.

Hence it is that they know,

1. The truth and reality of things spiritual. *Col. 1. 6, Since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth.* The grace of God is a notion men play with in the hear-say of it; but when they know it in the truth and reality of it, then it fructifies; they are therefore said to be of the truth, *Joh. 8. 37, Every one that is of the truth, heareth my voice.* The reality of things takes upon them. *Rom. 7. 9, When the law came, sin revived,* i. e. when the spirit brought it home, he saw it in the reality of it, *vers. 13, Sin appeared to be sin,* in its proper colours, and what a great evil it was, That took occasion, even by the Law and Commandment, to work in him all manner of evil.

2. The goodness, and worth of them. *Matt. 13. 45, The merchant-man, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all; he was able to judg of the value of it. 1 Pet. 2. 7, Unto you, which*



which believe, he is precious; that is, to those which have spiritual judgment and apprehension of things: other men would be ready with Judas, to sell Christ for thirty pence; or part with God for a small matter: When to David, the Lord is his portion, Psal. 16. 5.

3. The excellency and transcendency of them, Phil. 3. 8, *Yea doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency, &c.* δια το υπερεχον; propter eminentiam, because of the excellency. Psal. 89. 6, *Who in the heavens can be compared to the Lord?* Psal. 73. 25, *Whom have I in heaven but thee?* &c.

4. The great importance, and near concernment of things spiritual. John 16. 8, *He shall convince the world of sin, because they believe not,* i. e. that all their sins are upon their back, for want of Christ and his righteousness. The spirit of God never suffers the elect of God to take up with, and rest in a general notion of the Gospel without Application: Therefore having convinced of sin, he goes on to convince of the necessity of Faith and Righteousness. You have all the people of God therefore of the same mind in the main, with the Spirit speaking in Scripture, as to such things as these, John 3. 7, *Ye must be born again.* Mark 16. 16, *He that believeth not, shall be damned.* Luke 13. 5, *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish,* 1 Cor. 16. 22, *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, &c.* You have them therefore never satisfied without these things in some measure.

Object. 1. *But doth not a natural man know all these things; the reality, goodness, &c?*

Ans. There are three things which come under

der the notion of knowledg in the general. 1. Opinion. 2. Science, or Knowledg properly so called. 3. Faith.

1. Opinion is a slighty assent unto things, grounded upon meer probable Arguments: whence they think it is so, and it may be otherwise.

2. Science is a firm assent to things grounded upon Demonstration, or the reason of things: which certainly shew them to be so.

3. Faith in the general is an assent unto any thing upon the credit of another. And so far as his credit will go that delivers such a thing, such is our Faith. And this is either, 1. Humane, or 2. Divine. Founded either upon the word of Man, which is always fallible: or upon the word and authority of God, which is always certain.

1. According to the first; it is easily granted, men may have knowledg, *i. e.* if opinion be taken for knowledg. And thus they may dispute *pro* and *con*, in matters spiritual, and yet know nothing in truth; Nay, they may dispute only *pro*, and defend the truth, and yet not know the truth, nor be men of understanding; (*Dialectica est ars differendi de re qualibet.* Logick is an art discoursing concerning any thing) beacuse they apprehend the Arguments of Scripture, only as probable.

2. As to the second, a natural man may have an assent, a firm assent to many things in the word of God; beacuse he is able to give a rational account of them, even from natural Principles. And hereupon many believe (to speak of Faith largely) many things: And hence it is, that they reject others also. But this is believing spiritual things no other ways, than we believe any other book

or discourse. I will at this rate believe any thing for which any man can shew me good reason. And then also, the man, that hath the strongest reason, must needs carry it. This is but a common faith; no special assent that Scripture requires: from this men may discourse largely.

3. There is a faith, or belief, which natural men may have, even of things revealed in Scripture, because revealed: which yet is not deep enough, nor will serve turn. *Joh. 2. 23, 24, Many believed in him, when they saw the miracles which he did; but he did not commit himself to them.* Here was a company of believers which Jesus Christ durst not trust. *Joh. 12. 42, 43, Amongst the chief rulers also, many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees, they did not confess him: For they loved the praise of men, more than the praise of God.* There may be a forced faith (as it seems here) by the conviction of miracles; a traditional faith, when men take such and such Doctrines for granted, because the Church delivers them; or from slight apprehensions of the truth of the Gospel, as seeming most probable. Any of these will serve for Discourse; but none of them save the Soul.

Object. 2. *But they must needs grant, these things are so true and good, &c. they are able to argue them.*

*Ans.* Though they may argue them from the aforesaid principles: Yet they see not the reality, goodness, excellency; much less, the *super-excellency* of them: If they did, it would transform them.

1. They discern not, perceive not, the things, *in propria specie*, but only *aliena*, in their proper colours, but only in others. They apprehend words, and phrases, parables, similitudes, common notions; but not the things in their special, peculiar, specifical notion. They see the second notions; not the proper, native, spiritual goodness and excellency; which is the thing, that works, and is effectual. *Matt. 13. 11, To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of heaven; but to others it is not given: But to others in parables* (as it is *Luk. 8. 10,*) *That seeing, they see not, and hearing, they hear not. Ye shall see, and not perceive, lest at any time, they should understand with their heart, and should be converted, Matt. 13. 13, 14, 15.* They that understand the mystery, are converted. If God, or Christ, or Holiness were seen in their native excellency, they must needs affect Men. If sin was seen in its native deformity, and defilement, it must needs make men hate it. *Deut. 29. 2, 3, 4, Ye have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, upon Pharoah, &c. The great temptations, and signs, and those great miracles: yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive to this day.* They perceive not, *veritatem, rem ipsam*, the thing it self, the truth; but only the second notions of them, and terms which nature, custom, or education teach them: so all things are dark and insignificant to them. Natural men see heavenly things, but not in their own proper light, but by an inferiour light. *Sibbs in his Bruis'd Reed, pag. 100.*

2. They see them not, *in particulari*, in particular. Therefore their knowledg is insignificant, and

and comes to nothing. The things are all particular, or rather singular. Reason apprehends them not, but by the help of sense; which either needs their presence, *vel saltem representationem earum spirituales*, or at least the spiritual representation of them, *Ames. de lum. natura*. Heavens light is to guide in the particular passages of life. Dr. Sibbs *bruif.* reed pag. 103. When they meet with an universal proposition, or truth in Scripture, they see not themselves implied. *ex. gr.* Ezek. 18. 4, *The soul that sins shall dye.* Or Joh. 3. 16, *Whosoever believes, shall have everlasting life.* *A deceived heart hath turned them aside, that they cannot deliver their own soul, nor say, is there not a lye in my right hand?* Isa. 44. 20.

3. They see them not, *judicio practico*, with a practical judgment. And so they apprehend them not true, or good in relation to themselves. All Divine knowledg is practical, *i. e.* influential first upon the affection, and then to action; all things in the Book of God are written to this end, even the most speculative mysteries of the Gospel. But when nothing takes upon the Conscience, so as by it to be commended to the heart, then all knowledg is uselets and ineffectual: For in practical Sciences, what is all knowledg, that speaks not to practice? What is all the knowledg of a Scholar in Moral Philosophy, that can talk of the *summum bonum*, the chief good, and the *ultimus finis*, the last end; and yet directs nothing hereunto, nor squares accordingly? What doth it signifie, to have the exact definition of all virtues and vices; and yet neither hate the one, nor love the other? So, what is all knowledg



ledg in Divinity that a Man's Conscience never commends to him, as good for him? Spiritual light sees spiritual good, with application to our selves. Dr. Sibbs, Br. r. pag. 109.

4. They see them not, *modo congruo*, in a taking manner. Religion suits not their persons. They are rich, and 'tis below them: or they are poor, and cannot find time, &c. It agrees not with their business, as they count: They have *oxen, and farms, and wives*, or something to mind before it, *Luk. 14. 18, 19, 20.* At least, it suits them not at the present: As he said, *non modo domine*, not yet Lord. *Aug.*

2dly, There are many properties, and adjuncts, whereby this right understanding is distinguished in Scripture; as

1. It is knowledg with acknowledgment. *Eph. 1. 17, The spirit of revelation, in the acknowledgment of the truth. Col. 3. 2, To the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the father, and of Christ.* Acknowledgment is an owning a thing in particular; as we do a Man we are acquainted with; which is the product of that evidence the Spirit of God gives to the things he attests.

2. It is knowledg with approbation and allowance. *Jer. 24. 7, And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord:—for they shall turn unto me with their whole heart. Phil. 1. 9, 10, And this I pray, that your love may abound—in knowledg, and in all judgment: that ye may approve things that are excellent. Joh. 4. 10, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that says to thee, &c. thou wouldest have asked of him, &c.*

3. It is knowledg with appropriation, *Job 5.*

27, *Hear it, and know it for thy good. Is it I? is it I?* As the Apostles cryed out, *Mark 14. 19.*

4. It is a knowledg joyned with the fear of the Lord. *Job 28. ult.* And unto man he said, *Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil, is understanding.* The fear of the Lord, *i.e.* a filial, reverential fear: Not as the *Indians* fear the Devil, lest he should hurt them. There is many an ignorant Man goes plodding on, and makes account he fears God: But does he e're the more for his think-so? No, he must be a Man of some knowledg that fears the Lord. But this right knowledg is not a meer knowledg, (as some prating men would have it) but necessarily joyned with the fear of the Lord.

5. It is described by its cause: It is of Divine operation. *Eph. 1. 17, Give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation.* *Jam. 4. 17, But the wisdom which is from above, &c.*

6. By it's preeminence and excellency, *Prov. 4. 7, Wisdom is the principal thing: therefore get wisdom, &c.* Natural wisdom is not the Principal. *Job 28. 12, Where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding?* *Vers. 13, Man knoweth not the price thereof: neither is it found in the land of the living,* *Vers. 18. No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls; for the price of wisdom is above rubies.*

7. By its effects, *Eccles. 7. 12, But the excellency of knowledg is, that wisdom-gives life to them which have it.* *Prov. 24. 5, A wise man is strong, and a man of knowledg increaseth strength.*

8. From its latency, and obscurity to men. *Job 28. 21, It is hid from the eyes of all living,* *Matt.*

11. 25, *Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent.* Prov. 24. 7, *Wisdom is too high for a fool.*

9. By its self-denial, 1 Cor. 3. 18, *Let him become a fool, that he may be wise.* How is that? distrust all his own wisdom, to learn this true wisdom. 2 Cor. 3. 5, *Not that we are sufficient of our selves, to think any thing as of our selves.* Prov. 3. 5, *And lean not to thine own understanding.*

10. To have done. It is joyned with purity of heart, with works, and a good conversation. Jam. 4. 17, *But the wisdom which is from above, is first pure, &c.* Vers. 13, *Who is a wise man, and indued with knowledg amongst you? let him shew out of a good conversation, his works.* Jer. 22. 15, 16, *Did not thy father eat, and drink, and do judgment, and justice, and then it was well with him? Was not this to know me, saith the Lord?* Many more excellent properties I might enlarge upon (though you see I have contented my self with the bare mention of these). I only turn you again to that, Jam. 4. 17, *But the wisdom which is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, &c. full of mercy, and of good fruits, without partiality, without hypocrisie.* So I have dispatched this third particular: The fourth remains.

4. Whence is it, that a natural man knows not?

To speak to it in a few words.

1. Partly, from the sublimity and great excellency of the things to be known. Some things are difficult to know, because of their imperfection; others from their great perfection and sublimity. Such are spiritual things, and therefore they exceed

ceed all natural knowledg. They are said to be *things above*, Col. 3. 1, 2. *The way of life which is above*. Prov. 15. 24, *The great things of Gods law*, Hosea 8. 12.

2. By reason of the utter impotency of the subject. For though the things were sublime and heavenly, yet man once knew them with ease, and delight. But now he hath lost the Image of God, he can no more bear the light of them; than the Owl the Sun, *he hates the light*, John 3. 20. Every natural man is carnal: as is clear from the Apostles argument, *Rom. 8. 9, But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be the spirit of God dwell in you*. But no natural man hath the spirit of God dwelling in him: Therefore he is in the flesh, or carnal. And *the carnal mind is enmity to God*, vers. 7. Flesh hath always a blind with it, a man will not see that which he hath no mind to know; Therefore it is called *the wisdom of the flesh*, vers. 6. Because it is wholly subjected to, acted, and agitated by the flesh. However, suppose a man were in pure naturals (as they call it), yet what is that which is natural, to that which is spiritual? Nature cannot rise so high, and spiritual things cannot abate of their excellency; and so they keep a perpetual distance.

1. Then what a strange perverted creature is a natural Man. All things must needs be out of order, when the King is out of the throne: all things in confusion while men are wholly in the dark. *If thine eye be evil, thy whole body is full of darkness*, and men in darkness know not whither they go. 1 John 2. 11. Men in darkness distinguish of nothing: A man may take his foe for his friend.

Natural

Natural men are ready therefore presently to stumble upon any thing; to swear, and make no matter of it; to break the sabbath, and turn their back upon Gods ordinances, and make nothing of it; attempt their neighbours chastity, and prostitute their own, and make nothing of it; eat and drink to the abuse of themselves, and all Gods mercies, and make nothing of it; wipe their mouth, and all is well. If they hit upon that which is good, it is but a chance; and God never regards the sacrifice of fools. It is true, God impresses so much light, by reason, education, restraint of laws, the censure of wise men, that many are kept within some bounds of civility, or else the world would not be tolerable. Yet, where this spiritual light and understanding, I have been speaking of, is wanting, there is nothing but fancy, affection, and self-will, in this little world Man: And fancy, and affection are no more than the Principles of Beasts. *Man that understandeth not, is like the beast.* Psal. 49. ult.

2. What an utter incapacity is every man in, for heaven, and happiness! Every body thinks they are going thither, though they be quite out of the way. If you would go by the law ( though indeed there is no hope that way ) the law requires knowledg, and effectual knowledg, *Rom. 10. 5, For the righteousness of the law saith, the man that doth them, shall live in them:* If by the Gospel; it is by his knowledg shall my righteous servant justify many, *Isa. 53. 11.* Nay, suppose thou couldst by Gods connivance, croud into heaven: *q. d.* What wouldst thou do there? when the happiness of heaven is *to see him as he is,* 1 John 3. 2. And



And what would this signifie to him that hath no eye-sight? Thou that hast no knowledg of God here, How wilt thou be able to abide the sight of him face to face? Let me add this, and I leave thee: They that are found ignorant at that day, are the ready fewel for his flames. *2 Thes. 1. 8, In flaming fire, taking vengeance of them that know not God.*

3. This shews the religion of natural men is just nothing at all in truth. Take their prayers (wherein most men trust, and count their religion), and what are they without Faith? *Rom. 10. 14, How shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed? And faith cannot be without knowledg.* Take them in their repentings, and these cannot be without knowledg, (though no question, many think they repent every day) for repentance is grief for offending God; Which cannot be without the true knowledg of God; nor without the knowledg of the Nature of sin, nor without the knowledg of Gods grace: Which is the spring that feeds the heart with godly sorrow. That repentance that hath only torment in it, and vexation, is no true repentance: for that is a voluntary casting down of a mans self. *Job ult. 6, Wherefore I abhor my self, and repent.* There are great pretences of love: but this cannot be without the knowledg I have been speaking of. It were a wonder indeed, if a man should love God, and never know him. Therefore God promises this as a foundation-mercy, *Jer. 24. 9, I will give them an heart to know me.* *Heb. 8. 11, They shall all know me, &c.* All worship of God outward or inward, hangs upon this, the true spiritual knowledg of him. Paul therefore

therefore takes all the religion of the *Athenians*, (whom ye ignorantly worship) for meer superstition, *Acts* 17. 23. There is no Christian of any size, great or small; but he knows God. *I write unto you fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you little children, because ye have known the father,* 1 John 2. 13.

*Object.* If this be the case of every natural man, we need the less care.

*Answ.* 1. What absurd non-sense is this? if others perish, I will perish with them; will you run hazards with other men meerly for company sake, to your own everlasting ruine and undoing?

*Answ.* 2. The elect of God cannot thus content themselves to persist in such folly; to persist in such desperateness, is not the property of those persons that shall come to heaven.

*Answ.* 3. This proves but what I have been preaching all this while; that there is a sottish ignorance that possesses natural men, and they have no understanding. Let the snare of thy heart no longer hold thee; but now trap thy self in thine own deceit. *We therefore preach, if God peradventure will give you repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth, that ye may recover your selves out of the snare of the devil,* 2 Tim. 2. 25, 26.

4. Then a few words for trial, whether we have any spiritual understanding, who have none naturally.

*Trial* 1. If thou hast any, thou hast been taught it, and learn'd it by more than humane teachers.

*Eph.* 4

Eph. 4. 21. The Spirit of God hath written something in the fleshly tables of thy heart. I say not, but thou hast been taught by men and means: but God hath blest them to thee, that they have been more than humane. Doth light shine into a dark house, and not affect men, and make them sensible?

Tr. 2. If so thou findest thy self much differing from other men, in thy practical judgment, and apprehension of things; and even, from thy self formerly (I speak of those that are not by education timely converted) by an admirable change; Thou art transformed in the renewing of thy mind, Rom. 12. 2. Thou pitiest men that lie in ignorance, under mistakes and prejudices. Tir. 3. 3, *For we were sometimes foolisha, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasure, &c.* ver. 4, *But after that the kindness and love of God towards man appeared, q. d.* Then we had another judgment of things, and became other persons.

Tr. 3. Divine knowledg affords thee satisfaction. It is satisfaction to thy mind, and very heart, Isa. 54. 13, *And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord: and great shall be the peace of thy children.* Whether they have peace by believing or no, they have peace in believing: It is great satisfaction to them, that they know what they know: and they would not be otherwise minded for any thing. Psal. 119. 14, *I have rejoyced in the way of thy statutes, as much as in all riches.* You know what joy and content Men take in such things, Vers. 19, *I am a stranger upon earth, hide not thy commandments from me, q. d.* then I shall

shall have satisfaction enough. *Shew us the Father,* says *Philip, and it sufficeth us,* Joh. 14. 8.

*Tr. 4.* And last: It is present salvation to thee. Knowledg, and spiritual understanding are saving, not only in the issue, and event; but even at present. This is a star, to guide thee in all thy ways. *Psal. 17. 4, Concerning the works of men, by the words of thy lips, I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.* It is a light that shines in a dark place, to shew thee what to pursue, and what to be wary of, *2 Pet. 1. 19.* But now I desist, having given you several properties of this Divine knowledg before; to which I refer you.

5. This serves to take us off from self-conceit and presumption. Many men from their parts and abilities, presume they can understand any thing; which usually prove the most blind of all Men. *Joh. 9. 39, For judgment am I come into this world, that they which see, might be made blind.* Who more blind than the *Pharisees*, and more presumptuous? Nay even, those that are convinced of the errour of their ways, do many times think, and purpose with themselves; If they be wrong at present, by Gods help they will be right. Understanding little more, by Gods help, than a common Providence, to lend them their understanding, and its exercise. Thou mayest have all this, and little the nearer.

*Quest. But how then shall we do to know?*

*Ans.* 1. I am sensible I have spoke to this purpose already; but I shall here speak it again, at least in another manner. If men were come to ask such a question seriously, rather than *Sophis-*  
ter.

ster-like for question sake, the resolution were not so hard. I say then, 1. Know, none can teach this knowledg but God alone. There is no body can teach this Art: though all other Arts may be learned. You will be blind under all the most exact, distinct, judicious determinations, counsels, and decisions of Men: They shall be no more to you, than the Popes decrees. Not but that God teaches by Men as his Instruments; and by means; but his teachings are more immediate, than the most immediate means. *Matt. 11. 27, No man knows the father, save the son, and he to whomsoever the son will reveal him:* Not the Jews themselves, though they professed to know God. Unless God teach, you will always err, *toto cælo*, the breadth of the heavens.

2. Expect not teaching, unless you use means. You know the World commonly opposes these two: If God teach, what need we trouble our selves? If we take pains, what need we be beholding to God? But these are things subordinate, not opposed. God teaches, but he teaches by means, and by Men: Therefore that is the way thou art to apply thy self to. *Rom. 10. 14, How shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? So then, faith comes by hearing,* vers. 17. Therefore it is, that we are bid, *Work out our salvation with fear and trembling: Because God works in us,* &c. *Phil. 2. 12, 13.* You see the method the Servants of God have taken for Teaching. *Psal. 119. 15, I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways; and yet, open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law!* vers. 18.



6. What a wonder of mercy hath God shewed to those he hath taught! what grace is it, that hath exempted you from the rest of the World? *Matt. 11. 25, 26, I thank thee, O father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.* As it is admirable, so you see it's set upon the score of distinguishing grace. This should make us cry out, as Judas, (not Iscariot,) *How is it Lord, that thou wilt manifest thy self to us, and not unto the world!*

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## CHAP. X.

**T**O see if there were any that did seek God:  
*They are all gone aside.*

We have seen, what the mind of a natural man is. We are now to enquire, whether his heart be any better. The mind and the heart, being the two principle parts, and the two great Regents in this little World; we shall in the anatomy of them, much discover what the whole is. And if he do no more seek, than understand (as indeed one will follow from the other) we shall then find, that all is naught with him.

From the second and third verse laid together, we may gather; that there is none that seeks God: Which the Apostle therefore, *Rom. 3. 11.* puts in express terms: *There is none that seeketh after God.*

Obser.

Obser. 10. There is no natural man that seeks God.

For the clearing of it, we shall lead you by the paths of Scripture, and enquire,

1. What it grants in the case?

1. It grants an outside-seeking, even to natural Men; or seeking in a way of means-using. *Matt. 7. 7, Seek and ye shall find.* Where seeking being distinguished to asking, I interpret it of the use of other means. And so they may seek, *Luke 3. 24, For many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter.*

2. It grants a formal seeking, or seeking by way of Prayer. *Psal. 78. 34, When he slew them, then they sought him; and they returned, and enquired early after God.* Vers. 36, *Nevertheless, they did flatter him with their mouth, and lie unto him with their tongue;* as Dogs, that fawn when the cudgel is over them; or to get a bone. *Isa. 29. 13, This people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me; but have removed their heart far from me.* *Isa. 1. 15, Tsa, when you make many prayers, I will not hear you.* Multiply prayer, as in the Hebrew, over and over, again and again, pray much: yea, they may pray long too, *Matt. 23. 14, For a pretence make long prayers.*

Quest. Why, what is wanting in these two, that they be not counted right seeking?

Ans. 1. *Intentio ad finem*, they have no aim at the end. They use not means, as means; but only as duties, or tasks rather.

2. There is want of circumspection, or attention to the circumstances. And so they offer the sacrifice of fools; not considering what they do, or regarding how they do it. They want the great

things requisite in Moral actions, much more in spiritual.

3. They may seek with a self-seeking, seeking in their extremity, when trouble and anguish is upon them. *Isa. 26. 16, Lord, in trouble have they visited thee; they poured out a prayer, when thy chastening was upon them.* Every man wishes himself so much good, as in extremity to desire relief; and because there is in all, some kind of sense of a superior, therefore it is they seek unto God, but meerly, that he would stand their friend, or rather be their servant. Thus God presumes of proud *Ephraim: In their affliction they will seek me early,* *Hosea 5 15.* Thus many of the Russian generation may be full of prayers, and promises too at such a time, because they cannot tell how to help themselves. *Prov. 1. 28, They shall seek me early; but they shall not find me.* What? not they find, that seek early, when you may find this very word turned into promise, *Those that seek me early, shall find me?* *Prov. 8. 17.* But in this latter, I suppose [*Early*] by a Metalepsis to be taken for seriously, from the heart, and according to the rule of the word: but in the former, it is meerly out of fear, without any of the other qualifications, unless it be a meer Moral seriousness. *Verf. 27, When your fear cometh as desolation.*

4. There is an indirect preposterous seeking of God, which consists in voluntary humility, will-worship, maceration, and contempt of the body, &c. In which some may much seek, *Col. 2. 18, 23.* And thus many Papists, and men of their strain may be very devout, like *Baals* Priests; and count they do God good service, and engage him much by such kind

kind of ways. Hence come the Popish-scorpions; as if they would pacifie God with their own blood. From this conceit it's likely, came that abominable Idol *Moloch*: see *Jun. e Trem. Notes on Levit. 18. 21.* Which the Jews learned of the Gentiles: There must be humility indeed, and voluntary too; but if it be your own invention, you have no thank for your labour, but displeasure. There must be keeping down the body, *1 Cor. 9. ult. I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection*: But if it be simply so, as if you counted it a great matter in it self; meerly as if God was delighted with your torments, and self-punishment, you have your sorrow for your pain. It must indeed be kept under; but, as a man would his *Ass*, that it may be serviceable. All such kind of seekings are, as the Jews sought righteousness, *as it were by the works of the law, Rom. 9. 33.* and something worse: unless they could intrude themselves by their own doings into his favour, they would not be beholding for it. These men are never the nearer; because these are not means to Gods ends: for his means are according to his own will, not our fancy.

5. There is an unsound hypocritical-seeking; meerly upon some carnal design. So the enemies of *Judah* and *Benjamin*, would have built with the Jews; alledg, *For we seek your God, as ye do, Ezra 4. 1, 2.* Whereas it was a wretched pretence to hinder their work: So *Ephraim* shall come with their flocks and their herds to seek the Lord, *Hos. 5. 6.* In their oppression, and breaking, as was prophesied; when neither the *Assyrian*, nor King *Jareb* could help them: but they should not find him:

For the spirit of whoredoms was in the midst of them. Vers. 4. *i. e.* their very heart was deeply engaged in Idolatry.

Thus you see there are several ways called seeking in Scripture, which a meer natural Man may go. But now let us see what seeking it is, which Scripture denies of them?

1. There is some seeking in Scripture, which is made the description of a true Christian; and therefore it cannot belong to them: For that which constitutes a Christian, must needs distinguish him from all others. *Isa. 51. 1, Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord. Psal. 24. 6, This is the generation of them that seek him; that seek thy face, O Jacob!* The fourth verse will give you such a character of them, as can agree to no other than true Christians. So *Psal. 70. 4, Let all those that seek thee, rejoyce and be glad in thee.* Thus natural men are no seekers.

2. To descend by degrees: There is seeking with the soul and spirit. *Isa. 26. 8, 9, With my soul have I desired thee; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee.* Thus Jehoshaphat, though he was reprov'd by the Prophet Jehu, for helping Ahab, *2 Chron. 19. 2, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord?* Yet was commended, *vers. 3, He had prepared his heart to seek the Lord.* In the time of Jeroboams Apostacy, *Out of all the tribes of Israel, such as set their heart to seek the Lord God of Israel, came to Jerusalem to sacrifice, &c. 2 Chron. 11. 16.* Thus natural men seek not: It is not heart-deep, but all overly, superficial seeking.

3. There is a seeking with the whole heart, and  
all



all the heart. *Dent. 4. 29, But if from thence, thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him; if thou seek him with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, i. e. when they were scattered amongst the heathen, Psal. 119. 10, With my whole heart have I sought thee, says David. Thus Hezekiah, 2 Chron. 31. 21; In every work that he begun in the service of the house of God, and in the Law, and in the Commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered.* I am not willing to tire you with instances: See *2 Chron. 15. 12.* It is with the whole, and all the heart, in opposition to all other seeking: which either hath nothing of the heart, or else a divided false heart. Though Gods people seek not so intensely, earnestly, diligently, as they should; yet it is in truth with the whole heart, though the whole heart be not wholly in it. The phrase implies integrity, mind, and heart, are all this way. Ask them, do you think it best? yea truly, indeed I do; do you love it, and chuse it? yea with my soul; when they can have the sense of their hearts.

4. There is seeking, which is seconded and back'd in Scripture with many gracious promises and encouragements: Which, because I shall not have opportunity elsewhere, I shall a little here insist on, for the comfort of such true seekers, as well as the confirmation of the matter in hand. *Iam. 3. 25, The Lord is good to them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. Psal. 9. 10, For the Lord hath not forsaken them that seek him.* Whereas of all men, such are afraid God should leave them: We are apt to think we shall be never the near; as good sit still, as trouble our selves: See therefore *Prov.*

8. 17, *They that seek me early, i. e. from the heart, and diligently (as before), shall find me.* Jer. 29. 13, *Ye shall seek me, and find me. When ye shall search for me with all your heart.* They are apt to think their heart will die within them, and fail them: But see *Psal. 22. 26, Their heart shall live that seek God.* Your heart shall never, fail before you find. But if it be in an evil time we seek God; we are afraid we shall the sooner be made an hand of: See therefore *Amos 5. 6, Seek the Lord, and ye shall live.* The context leads me to interpret it of temporal deliverance, as *vers. 14, Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and so the Lord, the God of hosts shall be with you, as ye have spoken.* This is the way to life, to be sure. They fear, however, they shall miss the way to heaven: For this see *Prov. 28. 5, Evil men understand not judgment, but they that seek the Lord understand all things.* Where you see, seekers are opposed to evil men: And who are they that are opposed to evil, but good? And such good men understand all things, i. e. all things necessary to bring them to heaven at last: which was the thing in question, *Prov. 2. 4, 5. If thou seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasure; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.* They that seek the Lord, must of necessity be poor: in this case consult, *Matt. 6. 33, Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.* We balk God, and think our own wayes and courses the likeliest to thrive: and this is the way to undo our selves. *Psal. 34. 10, They that seek the Lord, shall want no good thing, i. e. relatively good, and formally good, nothing that*

is good for them. But we are afraid we shall never get out of our sackcloth and mourning: But see what a hopeful thing it is, by the *Psalms* encouragement, *Psal. 70. 4, Let all those that seek thee, rejoyce and be glad in thee: see himself an instance, Psal. 30. 11, Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing, &c.* I have laid before you Scriptures and their sense plentifully; wherein it appears, what kind of seeking a natural man may have, and what not. Now judg your selves, whether he can be said truly and properly to seek God, that seeks him not as his people seek him, with their heart, their whole heart; and such as brings them under promise. Which was the first thing I propounded to clear; In what sense according to Scripture it might be said, a natural Man might seek God, and what not?

2. The second particular, I now come to enquire more particularly, In what sense it is denied; and to state the question more clearly. Where observe,

1. It is not meant, but a natural Man may seek God, or sue to him to do him some particular courtesie, or shew him some special favour in a strait extremity, &c. As *Pharaoh*, and the flattering Jews, *Psal. 78. 36.*

2. Nor is the question, whether there be not something analogous in a natural Man, something that looks like it, that bears the same name and colour in Scripture.

3. But whether in truth, and reality, truly, and properly, a natural Man may be said to seek God?

Towards the resolution of this: I shall shew what is implied and included in this phrase *seeking God*:  
Which

Which will go a great way towards the case in hand.

1. It implies making God their main object, and their last end. I put them both together : because, what is a mans last end, will be his main object. *Psal. 27. 4, One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after.* And what doth this come to ? *To behold the beauty of the Lord.* Where other things are sought equally with him, he counts himself not sought at all, but dethroned, and deposed. When a man is more taken with gold, than with God ; then his gold is made his God : And therefore *covetousness is Idolatry, Col. 3. 5.* And a *covetous man is an Idolater, Eph. 5. 5.* So when a man is most addict to his belly, that is his God. *Phil. 3. 19, Whose God is their belly.* How near natural men come to this, or rather how far they are from seeking God, may appear afterwards : This is not its place, but it is easie to observe, that almost any thing carries it with them before God. They are so far from making God their last end ; that it is the last end of their thoughts.

2. It implies using means for this end, *i. e.* with that aim and intention that they might attain their desire. *Matt. 7. 7, Seek and ye shall find.* Using means in relation to the end, is an act of counsel and deliberation, not of custom and fashion.

3. It implies an absolute, choice and volition, in opposition to an imperfect conditional will. This imperfect, conditional will is that we call *veleity* ; which is a fleeting, inconstant, trembling motion, and desire of the soul ; it would if it durst ; it would but for cost ; it would but for pains ; it would, and it would not. These are not the seekers

seekers in *Matt.* 7. 7. nor *Luk.* 11. 13, *How much more shall your heavenly father give his holy spirit to them which ask him?* But this absolute choice, is when we desire, will, and chuse God, notwithstanding all inconveniencies, come what will come; fall back, fall edg, as in an instance very little differing. *Josh.* 24. 15, *Chuse ye whom ye will serve: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*

4. It implies a peremptory design and resolution, for the obtaining what it seeks. *Psal.* 27. 4, *One thing have I desired, that will I seek after.* Ver. 8, *Thy face Lord will I seek.* *Isa.* 26. 9, *With my spirit within me will I seek thee.* *The Kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force,* *Matt.* 11. 12. It is not a neutrality or indifferency unto God, as if they could mend themselves elsewhere.

5. It implies a freedom, and alacrity of spirit, *2 Chron.* 15. 15. *The people rejoyced, for they had sworn with all their heart, i. e. to seek the Lord,* *Psal.* 27. 8, *My heart answered, thy face Lord will I seek:* Yea Lord, I am ready, with all my heart. What the heart doth, is done indeed, even when a Christian goes to God under his clamps and fears, his God he seeks with a free heart; only he fears he may not be admitted.

6. It implies an integrity of the heart: When the heart seeks, all goes one way, i. e. all the powers are engaged, though not wholly. For the heart commands the whole soul, though it cannot fully. *Psal.* 119. 10, *With my whole heart have I sought thee.* Which one Scripture, had I said no more, proves all I have said already. A man never be-  
stows



flows his All, but upon that which is his Main.

3. The third particular. We shall now enquire whether a natural Man thus seeks God; or rather demonstrate, that he doth not: for all this while you have had it rather supposed.

*Demonstr.* 1. If they seek him, they know him. This is so clear a case, that seeking must needs be imagined a strange kind of thing; a meer blind devotion, if this be not granted. But that natural men know not, hath been largely proved elsewhere: For all divine Knowledge is influential; first upon the affection: secondly upon action: or, in other terms, it is practical.

They may know the *an sit*, that he is; and have some speculations as to the *quid sit*, what he is; but they know him not as God: therefore prefer other things to him; *Intelligit spiritualia quasi alia res essent, quam revera sunt*, &c. He understands spiritual things, as though they were other things than they are. *Ames. de cum. nat. & gr.*

*Demonstr.* 2. If they seek him, they desire him: for what is seeking but the act of the heart? The rational appetite (as they call it) extending it self to the thing desired, that it may enjoy it. Desire is put as the spring in the motion: *One thing have I desired, that will I seek after*, Psal. 27. 4. Therefore it is, that desiring and praying, are put for the same thing: *Thou hast given him his hearts desire, and hast not withheld the request of his lips*. Psal. 21. 2. But natural men desire not God. For,

1. They that desire, are sensible of their want: For what is desire, but looking out elsewhere for what it finds it needs at home? But no natural man wants God; I mean, is pinched with the sense  
of

of his want, i. e. sees it, feels it, mourns under it, as the Spouse, *Cant.* 3. 1, 2, *I sought him, but I found him not; I will arise now, and go about the city.* *Rev.* 3. 17, *And knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.* Here is *Laodicea*, like a poor, foolish, doting creature, counts her self rich, and encreased, and hath need of nothing; when yet she wants every thing. What made *Laodicea* so senseless, makes every natural man also. Men are clog'd with the sweet of sin, the fullomeness of the creature (the scent of many a mans kitchen takes away his favour of God, as *Calvin*), their own conceited riches, self-sufficiency, that they find no need of God in their imaginary fulness.

2. If they desire God, there is something must make him good unto them; something there is which must commend him, that may induce them to a good liking. This must either be from their own spirit, or the Spirit of God; if from their own spirit, Why was it not always so? For what is natural, is never separated; besides what Christ says, *Matt.* 11. 27, *Neither knoweth any man the father, save the son, and he to whomsoever the son will reveal him.* Not from the Spirit of God: for they have it not, *John* 14. 17, *He is the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive.*

3. If they desire, then there is something in a natural Man, which suits with God; for desire is of something which is good: and *bonum est, quod convenit*, good is that which is suitable: according to every mans temper and inclination, such is the good he seeks, because it suits him. So pleasure suits the voluptuous, riches the covetous. But there

there is nothing in the natural Man which suits with God, for that which suits with God, must be divine, and supernatural; and then also, there is no special difference between a natural man, and a spiritual: When yet the Apostle says, they differ as *light and darkness*, Eph. 5. 8.

4. If they desire God truly, and properly, it is with an absolute desire, not conditional. For by this, a man may be said, no more to desire that, than the contrary, but even, as it happens, or falls out. And this is that which God counts no desire at all, because such a man is a double-minded man: and *let not that man think, he shall receive any thing of the Lord*, James 1. 7, 8. They that desire truly, desire God without any exception of any thing that is in him, or comes with him: else every man would have something of God. according to their humor, if he could be divided. See what God says of *Ephraim* in this case, *Hos. 10. 2, 3. His heart is divided, now shall he be found faulty*, i. e. greatly faulty: for it was in the case of idolatry. They would have so much of God, as to preserve their state and polity against *Judah*, and all their enemies; but yet would share it between God and Idol.

5. If they desire, then all things are uniform, and accordingly, in some measure. A man that greatly desires, and does nothing; neither acts, nor consults how he may best; we count him a meer projector. They that drive on a purpose and design, are considerate, vigilant, industrious. *A wise woman considers a field, and buys it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard*, Prov. 31. 16. If natural men were so desirous, you should find them

them waiting at the posts of wisdoms-doors; you should have them enquiring the way to Zion with their faces thitherward; You should have them in their Closets, where God uses to be met with, musing, and solicitous, that they might not miss their *summum bonum*, their desired good. But doth not common observation, as well as Scripture tell us, they are *Gallio's*, and care for none of these matters? But *their eyes are in the ends of the earth*, Prov. 17. 24, *And their heart at their left hand*, Ecclesiastes, 10. 2.

*Demonstr. 3.* They that seek, would be glad to find: The poor Woman that lost but her groat, looks till she find, calls her friends and rejoyces, Luk. 15. 9. *Desire accomplish'd, is a tree of life*, Prov. 13. 12. *I found him, and would not let him go*, Cant. 3. 4. But natural men are so far from rejoycing to find God, that if God do but find them, they are confounded. If at any time God meet them in a Sermon, Prayer, Meditation, or otherwise; they are affrighted; he scares them, they run from him; they count themselves as caught in the Briars: 1 Kings 21. 20, *Hast thou found me, O mine enemy*, says *Ahab*? It was because God had found him indeed by the Prophet. *Ahab* counted him his enemy, for Gods sake. *I have found thee, because thou hast sold thy self to work evil*, &c. When God met with the proud Pharisees in *Stephen's* apology. *They gnashed upon him with their teeth*, Act. 7. 54. You'l say, they were hardened obstinate Sinners, and what differs an obstinate sinner from another, but in degree? Therefore take that Rom. 8. 7, *The carnal mind is enmity against God*. The *Gadarens*, a more moderate people, yet desire Jesus Christ  
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(even the whole City of them) to depart out of their coasts. *Vae tibi generatio prava & perversa; vae tibi stulte popule, & inspiens; qui memoriam fastidis, & praesentiam expavescis.* Bern.

*Demonstr.* 4. If the natural man seek God, then grace is a pearl in his eye. It is the description of the same persons: *Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord,* Isa. 51. 1. Faith and good works, I mean, actions inwardly and outwardly good, are now admired. For if the greater, why not the less? give any reason: And that,

1. Because it disposes to Divine reception. *Psal.* 25. 9. *The meek will he guide in judgment, the meek will he teach his way.* Isa. 57. 15, *I dwell with him also that is of an humble and contrite heart.* To be sure, grace disposes to communion with God: That is one reason why it is so desirable. It's true, he comes where the soul is not disposed, i. e. to dispose it; but not immediately to dispose himself to it, *ad fruitionem*, to be enjoyed: Though these many times differ not in order of Time, but of Nature.

2. Because this is that which inables them to seek, and seek with importunity. Hence it is, That they become *improbi flagitatores*, such bold Beggars, as *Luther* calls them. It is the elect partakers of grace, which cry *day and night*, Luk. 18. 7. This opens the mouth wide, and so disposes unto mercy, *Psal.* 81. 10, *Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.* What is it makes men seek, but a poverty of spirit, hunger and thirst, purity of heart in some measure, Faith and Dependence? *Rom.* 10. 14, *How shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed.*

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3. Because it makes them walk to pleasing. They that would enjoy God, are tender of offending him. And he that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, 1 John 3. 3. Therefore we labour, that whether present, or absent, we may be accepted of him, 2 Cor. 5. 9. i. e. do those things that please him, as Beza. But natural men are not for grace: this is the thing they are shie of, have no esteem for; are afraid it should prevail, and over-top them. Therefore it is, they fight, and struggle, resist, and quench the Holy Ghost in its motions and workings. Fools despise wisdom and instruction, Prov. 1. 7. i. e. to be wise, and to be instructed. And this is the reason why there is so much work in preparation to conversion. Natural men therefore seek not God, because they are such enemies to grace.

*Demonstr. 5.* If they seek him, they would be solicitous about finding him. See it in the *Psalmist*, Psal. 6. 3, *But thou, O Lord, how long?* Psal. 77. 3. *I remembered God, and was troubled.* To think God my great joy and solace, should be so far from me, Psal. 101. 2, *O when wilt thou come unto me.*

1. Solicitous about the end, i. e. whether they have found him, or are likely to find him. Therefore it is, there are such inquiries, and looking into their own soul, to see whether they can discern any footsteps, any appearance of God, any token for good. *Cant. 3. 2, By night on my bed I sought him,* i. e. to see whether he were there or no, for present enjoyment. *Psal. 77. 2, My soul refused to be comforted,* q. d. So long as I find not signs of Gods presence.

2. Solicitous about the means. *Cant. 1. 7, Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest,*  
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where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon, Chap. 3. 2, *I will rise now, and go about the city, in the streets, and in the broad ways will I seek him.*

3. Solicitous about impediments, and hinderances, *Psal. 77. 6, I commune with my own heart, and my spirit made diligent search: Lest there should any thing lie in the way, between him and me, Psal. 139. 23, 24, Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, Psal. 51. 16. Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it thee, q. d. If my defect was here, Lord, I would soon make it up.*

4. Their thoughts are working, and restless, until they find; they are not where they would be, but as in a strange land, cast out, *Psal. 61. 2, From the ends of the earth, will I cry unto thee, when my spirit is overwhelmed.* Looking upon himself, as cast into some abstruse corner of the world, *Psal. 116. 7, Return unto thy rest, O my soul: Intimating he was restless, as unsatisfied before.*

But natural men have no such thoughts, no such workings. Therefore you shall find the Daughters of Jerusalem, *i. e. carnal professors (which are all one with natural men), giving this answer to the Spouse, Cant. 5. 9, What is thy beloved more than another beloved? What is thy beloved more than another beloved? What is he? what is he? They are so far from being solicitous, that they wonder any body are about such a matter, Psal. 10. 4, The wicked through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God, God is not in all his thoughts, collectively, or distributively, in all, or any.*

*Demonstr.* 6. They that seek shall find, *Matt.* 7. 7. *Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find,* *Prov.* 8. 17, *And they that seek me early, shall find me.* But no natural Man shall find in his way; because no flesh shall glory in his presence, *1 Cor.* 1. 29, *Therefore Israel did not obtain* what he had sought for, *Rom.* 11. 7. And Christ says, *Many shall seek to enter, and shall not be able,* *Luk.* 13. 24. Such kind of seekers as those we are speaking of. If no natural Man find in his way, then no natural man seeks as he should; seeks God in truth and reality: Which was the thing to be proved. And so I dismiss this as clear, and proceed to the fourth particular.

4. The fourth particular; To enquire into the grounds and causes of this stupidity, or non-enquiry.

*Ground* 1. Because there are several Principles, which carry them clear another way: and therefore take them off from due seeking of him. And these are heart-principles, *i. e.* such as command the affection, and whole man: Though they may be able to argue the contrary.

*Principle* 1. That present, sensible good things, are the only good things. They know no other, or greater good than what they see, or taste, or converse with every day. They mind nothing but to be rich, live in pleasure, &c. *Job* 11. 12, *Vain man would be wise, though he be born like a wild asses colt,* that knows no other than present vanity. *Luk.* 16. 25, *Son, remember thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things.* Therefore they are called *men of the world, which have their portion,* *i. e.* their great good in this life, *Psal.* 17. 14. Now if any

*man love the world, the love of the father is not in him.*  
 1 Joh. 2. 15. Love, *i. e.* with an absolute love; so as to acquiesce in it, and prefer it: therefore they seek not God.

*Principle 2.* That God-injoyment is contrary to true Self-injoyment, and a Man's real Interest in the World. This is their maxim, though false. Indeed such a self-injoyment, as they mean, to do what they will, and what they list, in gratification of their lust, this is contrary. Now the Apostle sayes, *Eph. 2. 2,* That all natural Men, till regenerate, and quickned, *are after the course of this world.* And pray what is the course of the World, *but to fulfil the desires of the flesh, and of the mind?* Vers. 3. *i. e.* of a fleshly mind; but to live after, *either the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, or the pride of life.* 1 John 2. 16. They are all for gratifying their lust; though some in one kind, some in another; to be religious, will dash all their designs, spoile their fortunes, level all their towring thoughts. Therefore it is they seek not God.

*Principle 3.* To live in self-crossing, and self-denial, is but a Cynical, Stoical humour, and can never be consistent with a Mans real good and welfare. Thus a man must do that seeks God, *Isa. 55. 7,* *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, &c.* Mark 8. 34, *Let him deny himself:* But *as it is a sport to a fool to do mischief,* Prov. 10. 23. *So it is abomination to a fool to depart from evil,* Prov. 13. 19. They look upon it as a most pitiful contemptible thing, *They despise wisdom,* chap. 1. 7.

*Principle 4.* That to ransack their hearts, or unravel their life, is the way to turn fool, or mope.  
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The world is all for rejoycing, young and old. *Eccles. 11. 9, Rejoyce, O young man in thy youth, q. d. this is that thou wilt do : Hos. 9. 1, Rejoyce not, O Israel for joy, as other people.* They are for reioycing, though it be in a thing of nought ; though it be in that which is evil. *Prov. 2. 14, Who rejoyce to do evil.* But men must repent, and return, if they seek God, or ever expect to find him, *Ezek. 14. 6, 7, 8, Repent and turn your selves from your idols, and turn away your faces from all your abominations. For he that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling-block of his iniquity before his face, and comes to enquire concerning me, I the Lord will answer him by my self. And I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb.* The seriousness of repentance and godly sorrow, they think will mope them.

*Principle 5.* That living upon Gods word or promise, is next to nothing, or living upon the air. The people of God have the best living this way. *Heb. 13. 5, 6, For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, &c. Habbak. 2. 4, Now the just shall live by faith.* But natural men cannot live thus, they are strangers to the covenant of promise, *Eph. 2. 12.* as strangers passively, God giveth it not unto them as their portion; so they are actively, they love not so to live ; and it is strange to them. For they have no faith to make any thing real to them. What they have in hand, this they think they are sure of, and live upon, *Luk. 12. 19, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.* See an instance in the *Israelites, Numb. 13. 30, 31.*



And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it. But the men that went up with him, said, We be not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we. Caleb judged by faith, becaule of Gods promise, to give them the good land; but this was nothing unto them; becaule all the people were men of great stature; and there they saw the Giants, *vers.* 32, 33. Caleb's way of faith was foolishness to them. See the like, *Isa.* 30. 15, 16, For thus saith the Lord God, the holy One of Israel, in returning and rest shall ye be saved, in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength, and ye would not; but ye said, No, for we will flee upon horses. Gods word was nothing to them, unless they had the aid of Egypt. To contract, see *Jer.* 42. 10, 11. compare with *Jer.* 43. 4, 5. Therefore they seek not God; for they that seek, have respect to his word and promise.

*Principle 6.* That coming to God by Jesus Christ is but a kind of mysterious non-sense, that they know not what to make of. A sinner cannot seek God with any hope, but by Jesus Christ. *Heb.* 7. 19, By the which hope we draw nigh to God. That Christ died, that men may be saved without any more ado, this they think they understand, and applaud: But to be join'd to Christ according to the Apostle, *1 Cor.* 6. 17, and made members of him; this is a mystery they understand not: whereas God makes over himself to no man, but only in him, *2 Cor.* 1. 20, In him are all the promises, yea, and amen; and especially that great promise, *I will be thy God.* This is non-sense unto them, *1 Cor.* 1. 18, But the preaching of the cross is to them which perish

*perish foolishness.* Vers. 23, *But we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness.* And thus it is unto all, but those that are saved, as it follows; *But to them which are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.* Therefore they cannot truly seek God.

*Principle 7.* To recant any thing, or to repent, is but a weakness, and becomes not a man of resolution; especially a man of pre-engagements. Every man is pre-engaged, either to his lusts, or the men of the world: These they must be true to, though they perish for it. The heart of man is so deceitful, *Jer. 17. 9*, that it thinks it hath an indispensable necessity of adhering to some way, or course, or company, or interest, that it may not, it cannot recede from, as those in the Gospel, *Luk. 14. 18*, *All with one consent began to make excuse: The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.* Vers. 19, *Another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.* These would seem to come off fairly, and complement themselves out of Gods favour: The other is more peremptory, *Vers. 20*, *I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.* These are looked upon as great matters; whereas it is nothing but the hardness of mens hearts, and the blindness of mens minds that makes them think they are a sufficient excuse. For there can be no dispensation from being down-right religious; or else the heart is so desperately wicked, that it will on, whatever come on't, though it lose God and Heaven too. This Principle keeps them off from seeking God.

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*Principle 8.* That God may be found when they please, or else he is not worth seeking: In old age, when the pleasures and profits of the World leave them; when bed-ridden, or confined to their chambers, and cannot tell how to busie themselves any other way. Natural men have no such esteem of God, as to think him worth time, and labour all their dayes; either the World comes in too quick upon them, and then through confluence they say, *Depart from us, we desire not, &c.* Job 21. 14, or else too slow, and then they say, stand by; they have no time nor leasure yet. For I ask, 1. Have they not something which they prefer to God? And if so, they *cannot serve two Masters*, Luk. 16. 13. Or 2. Are they upright? if this cannot be said, then they are too high to wait upon God.

These Principles carrying the natural man another way, he cannot seek God, or seek him as he will be sought. And thus much of the first ground.

*Ground 2.* But there are more direct reasons of their non-seeking God.

1. For the most part, God is to them an unintelligible mystery. God is in himself such a mystery as cannot perfectly be understood by any creature, Saints or Angels. Col. 2. 2, *The mystery of God, and of the father, &c.* Job 11. 7, 8, *Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the almighty to perfection? It is as high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know.* Much more then, must he be so to a natural man, notwithstanding all the advantages of his works, or his word. John 17. 25, *O righteous father, the world hath not known thee.* He speaks of the

the World of reprobates, in opposition to the elect, or called, whether they were Jews or Gentiles. The Jews knew him not, though God himself had revealed himself unto them by his Prophets, and at last by his Son, *Heb. 1. 1, 2. Matt. 11. 27, Neither knoweth any man the father, save the son, and he to whomsoever the son will reveal him, i. e. revelatione interna*, by inward Revelation; for outward they had, and yet he was hid *to the wise and prudent*, *vers. 25*. Hence it is they are averse to him, and flee from him; because to them he is an unintelligible *ſadus*, depth, they are afraid to venture, lest they should be ingulph'd, and swallowed up. *Venerentur ne opprimantur*, for even his works and doings declare him to be *immensum aliquid, & miraculo simile*, immense and miraculous; and knowing nothing of his goodness and grace, *i. e.* his special kindness, they run from him, and dare not approach him.

2. So much as they know of him, they like only for their own sake. Men cannot but know something of him in such a sorry manner as it is: Something of his wisdom in contriving so glorious a Fabrick as the World; in preserving and maintaining what he hath made of his Omnipotence, in effecting what he hath so contrived, and all out of nothing; to omit his *magnalia*, and *terribilia*, his great and terrible works in the way of his Providence and Government; of his goodness and bounty, in being so well-willed unto his creatures, especially man the Master-piece of this lower World: So freely and bountifully every day and moment to communicate to them: *Thou openest thy hand: they are filled with good*, *Psal. 104. 28*. Thus I say, man cannot

cannot but know something of him in some manner, *Rom.* 1. 19, 20. But what they thus know of him, either in a way of speculation, as scholars; or by tast, and sense of his daily bounty, as even the Countrey-man may; they like, and love only for their own sake, no farther than will serve their turn. They would have a God, as authour of Nature, to preserve, and bleſs themselves, and what they have; to give rain and fruitful seasons when they need them; to keep their bodies in health and plight, encrease their Corn, Wine, and Oyl, and maintain peace in their borders. But what is this, but to desire God to be their servant? Which shews the abominable madness of mans Nature; they would be as 'twere supream, their own last end, and Gods too; and God blessed for ever, only a Medium to their felicity. *They would be as God,* Gen. 3. 5.

3. They are diametrically opposite and contrary to his holiness and purity. They hate to think of it; they could wish there was no such thing at all; at least that it were not at all concerned with them.

1. Because it requires and commands separation from all evil, *Habbak.* 1. 13, *Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil*, i. e. to behold it with any approbation, or liking. Though he sees it so as to requite it; he hates it so, as to hate the Sinner for it, *Psal.* 5. 5, *Thou hatest all workers of iniquity*: Though he may be reconciled to a sinner through Christ.

2. Because it implies and requires a separation from the world, i. e. not only that which is in it self sinful, and unlawful; but that which in its circum-



cumstances, in its use, and according to the manner of men, is unlawful. For holiness is opposite unto that which speaks an exclusion or privation of its self; whether it be in the thing bad, or only in the use: Therefore Christ *gave himself to deliver us from this present evil world, and that according to the will of God and our Father,* Gal. 1. 4.

3. Because it implies, and requires a love to that which is the most absolute purity, God himself. He commands all men to love him, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, this is the first and great commandment,* Matt. 22. 37, 38. Bate a man love to God, and he may do many things.

4. Because it requires such an addiction, and dedication to God, as never more to be alienated.

1. Of a mans self, *Rom. 12. 1, I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of the Lord, that you present your bodies, &c. i. e.* your selves by a synecdoche: for the body without the soul, is neither a living, holy, nor acceptable sacrifice to God. *Psal. 119. 38, Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear.* Therefore it is said of the *Macedonians, They gave themselves to the Lord,* 2 Cor. 8. 5.

2. Of his services, his endeavours; not barely himself; but what he can do: therefore it is not a dead or lifeless sacrifice, but a living.

3. Of his substance, *Prov 3. 9, Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase.*

But natural men are directly contrary, and opposite to all these:

1. To separation from sin; for it is not only said  
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of the Jews, *The lusts of your father, i. e. the devil, ye will do*, Joh. 8. 44. But of the whole world, *it lies in wickedness*, 1 Joh. 5. 19. And therefore must needs be averse to the contrary.

2. To separation from the world (as explain'd before): for the world is their whole, and all; earth is their heaven, and earthly things their *summum bonum*: Therefore they are called *men of this world*, Psal. 17. 14, and *men of the earth*, Psal. 10. 18. What makes men deny Christ, but *father, mother, brethren, sisters, house, and land*?

3. For love to God, and his absolute purity, they have such enmity to it, that therefore it is they hate Ministers, Christians, all that are of that mind, or would make them so, 1 John 3. 1, *Therefore the world knoweth us not*: Nay, *Therefore the world hates you*, Joh. 15. 19. They that hate it in so much imperfection, must needs hate it in the superlative degree. They that hate the picture, must needs hate the person.

4. As for dedication, and devoting unto God of themselves, their endeavours, and their substance: they are so far from it, that they will first chuse to do any thing; they that *yield themselves to God*, are such as are *alive from the dead*, Rom. 6. 13, *His servants they are to whom they yield themselves to obey*, Vers. 16. But that is any thing else but God, until by grace they be once conquered. *God be thanked, ye were the servants of sin, &c. But now ye have obeyed*, i. e. being overcome by Gods grace. The very scent of this at a distance, is that which keeps men from entertaining so much as any serious thought of religion, or seeking God in truth. This makes all religion loathsome to their impure spirits,

spirits, stifles and choaks all beginnings and good motions. To add, what is the thing that makes the great contest under conviction? What makes men even under terrours and contrition, so hard to be won by the Spirit of God, but this, That they must *take his yoke upon them*, Matt. 11. 28, and not only so, but *deny themselves, and take up their cross*, Matt. 16. 24? And so I have done with this.

4. Even his mercy and goodness they are contrary to. That which is the great winning, prevailing argument with all Gods people, whence they come to *put their trust under the shadow of his wings*: This, even this they are opposite to. The greatest and most universal motive, and likely ground to prevail, is to them nothing but matter of contempt. For though I give it for granted (as before) that the goodness of God, as expressed in his bountiful, munificent, dispensing, common mercies, *i. e.* such as concern this natural, temporal, fading life, is (at least from the teeth outward) much applauded (though at the same time they abuse it at their pleasure). Yet to this goodness, as dispensing, and communicating special benefits, and blessings as to his people, they are utterly averse.

1. As bestowing Christ, that great gift, they are utter enemies unto. God may keep his Son to himself, for ought they care. *John 5. 40, Ye will not come to me that ye may have life.* No, though the event, and issue be so happy, yet this would not prevail with the Jews. And what does a natural man differ from a stubborn Jew? What made the one such, makes the other so in degree. But if you will have a fuller place, see *John 6. 44, No*

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man can come unto me, i. e. no man can will me, or be willing of me: For this is coming in Scripture-phrafe, else they should signifie, no man come, *nisi qui veniunt*, as *Camer in loc.* but they that come. *Et quis trahitur, si jam volebat?* *Aug.* Who is drawn, if he be already willing?

2. They are enemies to this Goodness, or grace communicating the spirit: For *the spirit of truth, the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him*, Joh. 14. 17.

5. They are directly opposite to his Justice, because Justice distributes to every man his due. God being Justice its self, and the supream Judg cannot but judg in righteousness. *Gen. 18. 25, For shall not the judg of all the earth do right?* *Rom. 3. 5, 6. Is God unrighteous? God forbid: for then how shall God judg the world?* *Rom. 2. 2, We are sure the judgment of God is according to truth.* And how is that? *Vers. 6, He will render to every man according to his deeds*, *1 Thes. 4. 6, God is the avenger of all such*; and therefore they must needs fear him, and by consequence hate him: For *quem timemus, odimus*, whom we fear we hate; it is true indeed, there is a fear of reverence, which relates to worth and excellency, which is all alway mixt with love and admiration; but that fear which is of punishment only, makes men hate whom they so fear.

6. And lastly, They are enemies to his Omniscience, and Omnipotence, as backing his Justice; because they make him capable to execute his most just will upon them. His Omniscience will single out every secret thing, act, or thought; his Omnipotence is that irresistible power, whereby he turns *the wicked to hell with all the nations that forget God.*

God. Can the Thief but hate the light, or that power which hales him before the judg; and from thence to prison?

You see then how clear it is, that natural men are opposite to God; and therefore can never seek him in truth.

Object. 1. *But doth not a natural man know, that all his interest hangs upon God; his being, and his well-being? How then can he but seek him?*

Ans. 1. But pray, what is a natural man's great Interest? Is it not the world, or something in the world? Is not the natural man walking according to the course of the world? Now what is the course of the world? Is it not after profit, or pleasure, or the like?

2. These he presumes he can have in a way of common Providence. He sees little need of being beholden to God, more than the rest of the world are, even his fraternity of wicked men all the world over, *Pagans* and *Infidels*, *Turk* and *Pope*. He finds by experience in the way of common Providence, that God is so good, as to *do good against evil*; that *he makes his sun to rise on the evil, and on the good*, Matt. 5. 45. *And sendeth rain on the just and unjust*; that *they that tempt God, are even delivered*, Mal. 3. 15, *And the way of the wicked prospers*, Jer. 12. 1. He easily presumes therefore, he can have what he would without this, without seeking God.

3. But if he seek him, it's only in a sawn, and flattery, either as author of Nature, or as supream Lord of life and death meerly: which in truth is not to seek him as before.

4. But this they know not neither in Scripture-  
L sense;



sense, i. e. they know it not with due consideration, and affection, as before proved. For they know nothing of spiritual concernment, in a spiritual manner. Where is the man (the natural man I mean) that sits him down with any practical consideration of all the goodness of God to him, in the way of Providence, or of his dependance upon him?

5. All the knowledg they have of God, and their dependance upon him, will not reconcile them to God, nor make them love him, *supra omnia simpliciter*, simply, and absolutely above all; no, not as the authour of Nature: For thus they love him, *propter aliud*, for something else; and that other is most to them, and nearest their heart. So they always adhere, *bonis particularibus*, to particular good things: and so alwayes stick in the dirt.

Object. 2. But hath not mans soul an infinite capacity, and therefore cannot be satisfied without God? And if so, how can they but desire him, and consequently seek him?

Ans. 1. 'Tis true, the soul of Man is of an infinite capacity, and nothing finite will fill it; and therefore something infinite it must have ere it can be satisfied. Hence it is, that it is always whining and complaining; though it hath never so much, yet it must have more of the same, or something else: Which made Austin say, *Fecisti nos Domine, ad te, &c.* And Bernard, *Capacem Dei quicquid Deo minus est, non implebit: ceteris omnibus occupari potest, repleti non potest.* What ever is less than God, will not fill that which is capable of God: It may be taken up with other things not filled.

Ans. 2. Man hath therefore a *posse beatificari*, a possibi-

a possibility of being happy, because he may enjoy God; *i. e.* he hath an Understanding and Will, which may be advanced hereunto, and so be satisfied: Which is to be happy. He may be brought to know, and affect him, which is to enjoy him. *John 17. 3, This is life eternal, to know thee, &c.* Which knowledg implies affection.

*Ans. 3.* Man hath *a velle formalis sue beatitudinis*, a desire of happiness, *i. e.* he would be compleat, he would have enough: and this without any consideration, or deliberation. The poorest creature that lives, that knows not how to discourse of happiness, would yet be satisfied every way, and have enough. *Homo necessitatur circa ultimum finem.*

*Ans. 4.* There is *a necessitas querendi Deum*, a necessity of seeking God, *i. e.* if ever he will be happy, or satisfied, it must be in the enjoyment of God: because nothing else will fill, and so happifie him. Therefore it is, natural men are necessarily miserable. The soul devours and swallows up all finite things, and yet is in want, though under the greatest excess, *Job 20. 22, In the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits.*

*Ans. 5.* But a natural man doth not see, that God, or enjoyment of God, hath any necessary connection with his happiness, *i. e.* he thinks he may so be without God: nay, the thought of God spoys all his sport; is *mors in olla*, the *Coloquintida* in the pot. And therefore you have them usually taken up, either *bonis particularibus sejunctis*, or at least, *bonis particularibus conjunctis & unitis*, either with particular good things divided or united. *Psal. 4. 6, Who will shew us any good?*

*Answ. 6.* If he have any desire of God, 'tis but a veility, not a volition, as before, *i. e.* if he might have something in God upon his own terms; Interest in him, *ad conservandum* *Id ēvāi*, or his *Id ēvāi*, to preserve, or advance him in his natural happiness: It is all he desires. For the absolute choice of him, he is so far from it, that he neither desires himself should come to God, or God come near him, *being alienated, and an enemy to God by his mind, in wicked works*, Col. 1. 21. No, he is so glutted (though not satisfied) and befotted with temporal good things, that he is wholly taken up with them, and seeks no farther. He may desire him possibly, as an infinite good; but not as an holy, just, gracious good; desire him as he is a natural end, at least a Medium to his good, not as a supernatural. There is something he desires, which is no where but in God; but he doth not directly desire God, much less all in God.

*Answ. 7.* This capacity then that we speak of, doth only difference him from a stock, or a stone, or a beast, being made naturally capable of that which they are not. For they have neither understanding nor will; but are tied to one thing by a necessity of nature. But this is only *potentia passiva*, a remote, a very remote capacity; which may by grace be advanced to seek God. And thus every natural man may be said to be capable of heaven, not that he is so proximately, or in any next disposition: But because, by the mercy and power of God, he may be regenerate, and so made meet to partake of the Inheritance of the Saints in light, Col. 1. 12. And thus he hath *a posse beatificari*: But this is only in relation to the power of

of God, that it's possible: Who can do what he please; and even of stones, raise up children unto Abraham, Matt. 3. 9. i. e. first make them men, and then of men true believers. This therefore will be one great torment of hell, that they had souls capable, and that will never be satisfied without an infinite good: and yet they could not find in their heart to will this good, with an absolute volition.

Lastly, If any man think there is more in it: let him think again; the Devils and damned must have it, whatever it be, as well as they: make them also seekers of God.

Object. 3. But *bonum in communi est objectum voluntatis*. It is commonly said, that good in common is the Object of the Will. Therefore every man naturally seeks God, and must.

*Ans.* 1. The meaning is, whatever the will desires, or chuses, must be good, at least appear so to be. Not that it values every good, which is so in its own nature; but that which hath in it, *rationem appetibilitatis*, the reason why it should be desired: Which is, *Convenientia respectu sui*. Profit is good; but a man addict to pleasures, regards it not, but casts it at his heels, that he may have his humour. So to him it is not good, that is, not convenient, but evil rather. Nothing can invite

*Objectum appetitus intellectivi, qui voluntas dicitur, est bonum secundum communem boni rationem, nec potest esse aliquis appetitus nisi boni. Aquin. nar. prim. qu. 59. artic. 4. Item qu. 80. artic. 2. Item qu. 82. artic. 4. Secundum communem rationem; sui objecti, quod est bonum.*

the will, but what appears good ; for evil, as evil, is not to be chosen. And that's the reason why some men make away themselves ; because it appears good to them, rather not to be at all, than to live in shame, poverty, reproach, or misery. Nay therefore it is, the Devils themselves blaspheme the Lord ; because it seems good to them, thus far to satisfy their revenge, *q. d.* against the most high, whom they cannot otherwise hurt. But for a natural man to think of God, it hath no conveniency, or suitableness to him at all ; he abhors the thought.

*Ans. 2.* This good must be *bonum apprehensum*, apprehended. For men are not carried to good, as other things are, by meer instinct or inclination of nature ; but it is, to what is dictated to them by reason and judgment. For though liberty be in the will, as it's subject ; and from thence hath its form ; yet it is in the understanding, as in the root and cause. Therefore a man wills this, or wills that, wills, or not wills ; because he apprehends by reason divine, or humane, that it is to be chosen, or not to be chosen. God never made man like a head-strong horse, that runs this way, or that way, without any guide. But no natural man hath any apprehension of God as good : reason tells him no such matter. And therefore it is, you never find him at a loss here ; I mean, complaining of the want of God and his absence ; but only Christians, *Psal. 30. 7. Thou hidst thy face, and I was troubled.*

*Ans. 3.* Though they necessarily seek happiness, and their will is necessitated about this last end ; because no man can Will to be miserable : Yet it appears



appears not to a natural man, that *habere Deum*, to have God, hath any necessary connection with his happiness, they do not so much as dream, that God alone is the *materia beatificans*, the thing that can make them happy: and therefore say not with David, *It is good for me to draw nigh to God*; Psal. 73. ult. No, it is best they count, for them to be farthest off.

4. They are so prejudic'd, or taken up with particular good things, that like a vitiated palate, they can relish nothing spiritual. Reason in them is a slave to their sense, *anima obbrutescit*, the soul is brutish, as Calvin says; though God be *dulcedo mea*, in the Fathers apprehension; Yet the full soul loaths the honey-comb, Prov. 27. 7. The cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choak, as the word, so all things spiritual, Mark. 4. 19. We see a sad instance in the young man: *He went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions*, Matt. 19. 22. His possessions had him, as Mr. Rogers says.

5. God is no good to a natural man, nor can be, without regenerating grace. Nay he appears such an evil to him, that he flees him as the Devil; And that

1. Because he is not *bonum satians*, a satisfying good to him; and that, because not carnal. They are all for *what they shall eat, and what they shall drink, and what they shall put on, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life*: For these are of the world, 1 Joh. 2. 16. Therefore, because God is not suited to these desires, he hath to them an evil name, an evil resentment. Because he is not to them a satisfying good, therefore he appears

*sub ratione mali*, under the notion of evil, and so to be rejected.

2. Because he is to them *bonum obstruens*, a spoil-good, a hinder-good; the only thing, they think, that stands in their light and happiness; in as much as they know him against that they most affect, and the course they take. What's that? *To walk after the imagination of their own heart*. What would a natural man do, but that which is right in his own eyes? He would be without Law, without Rule, without Controul; and therefore without an over-seer. He would have as much of the world as he pleases, take as much of his pleasure, as seems him good; and because God is an enemy to this, he therefore is an enemy to God; and thinks he sees reason to be mad, *viz.* to reject God. So out of reason he seems to reject him, though against all reason. He appears to him, *sub ratione mali*, under the notion of evil. And this is such a distemper in natural men, as will never be cured without regenerating grace. For this is not only their passion; but their will, their deliberation, and inclination, their law, and rule. And thus you see, though the will cannot chuse any thing, but under the notion of good; yet how wilfully it rejects God the chief good.

Object. 4. *Men can love the lesser good, why not the greater, seeing the greater is alway more lovely than the less; and therefore more desirable? Man can seek, will, and chuse that which is fair and pleasant: why then, cannot he chuse God which is most desirable?*

Ans. 1. It is not simply the betterness, or excellency

cellency of the Object, that makes men chuse it ; but the suitableness to their faculty. The object makes no faculty, or power of chusing ; but only draws it out by a Metaphorical motion ; and therefore presupposes it. But a natural man is without any spiritual power or faculty ; *weak and without strength*, Rom. 5. 6. Why see we not every man wonderfully taken with God, if this were all ? even those that behold him, but in the beauty of his works, and every dayes Providence ? You cannot say it is want of super-excellency in God : But it must needs be degeneracy in man.

*Ans. 2.* As if there was no difference between Natural, Moral, and Spiritual good : Whereas they differ the breadth of the Heavens. Spiritual good is of a higher rank and nature, that it makes them which have it, differ from others, as light and darkness, Eph. 5. 8. as happy and blessed, from cursed and miserable. *Blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are they that hunger and thirst ; blessed are the pure in heart*, Matt. 5. 3, 6, 8. You hear no such Eulogy of the most knowing, wise, prudent, moral Man in the World, but *depart from me ye cursed*. There is such a difference between these natural, and super-natural ; moral, and spiritual ; that divers School-men, and those Papists, have not only disputed, but defended, that there is not only no man in the World, but no creature that can love God, out of the meer, or pure Principles of nature ; and that it is impossible that God should make a creature so : Namely, that that which is super-natural ( as the love of God ) should belong unto the principles of his Nature. *Cajetan Alvar. Thom. & Thomiste. vid. Alvar. de auxiliis gratie divine disp.*

*disp.* 69. It follows not then, because men love that which is natural, or moral, therefore they can that which is spiritual; spiritual Objects must have a super-natural principle, as the *principium quo*, principle from which, though the *principium quod*, principle with which, be the same. Paul while a Pharisee, pleased himself with Morals; but when the law came in its spirituality, *then he died*, Rom. 7. 9, because he saw he could not reach it; therefore he was a condemned man in his own sense. So I gladly dismiss these difficulties.

Quest. Lastly, *Where then is the first error, that a natural man seeks not God?*

*Answ.* 1. If you enquire what is the first in order; I answer, it is in the understanding, because that is the leading faculty; and the will of it self is *potentia cæca*, a blind power, and acts not, but as the understanding propounds, and offers to it what it judges good. It wills nothing (as before) but under the notion of good: But whether this or that be good or bad, that is, *sub judicio rationis*, at the judgment of reason. Hence it is, That *omnis peccans est ignorans*, that every sinner is an ignorant man. Not but that there are sins of malice, as well as of ignorance, as in the very case of Christs crucifixion: Yet, even then, he that sins out of malice, knows not what he should know, 1 Cor. 2. 8. *Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, i. e. the hidden wisdom, Vers. 7, They would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

*Answ.* 2. But if the query be, Where is the principal, or main error? Then I say it is in the will.  
For,

For, 1. The will hath *imperium despoticum*, it orders all that is done, as a Master orders all in his family. 2. Because it is *appetitus totius hominis*; it chuses, and so refuses, for the whole man; the affections, or the sensitive powers have their appetites; and the understanding hath its appetite: For it hath an inclination unto its proper object, truth, as well as others unto their. But the will chuses, or refuses for the whole: And therefore, orders even the understanding it self; whether it shall consider of this or that, or let it alone. *John 8. 43, Why do ye not understand my speech, says Christ? even, because ye cannot hear my word, i. e. obey it. And why could they not? because they would not.*

3. Because men may understand more by nature, than the will approves, or consents too. *Rom. 1. ult. Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them. Though they know them to be evil, nay penal and capital, yet they do them. How comes that? They have pleasure in them, it is their will. So now I have done with this great truth, as to the Doctrine of it.*

If no natural man seeks God,

1. Then every natural man is of necessity miserable in that state, Because he wills not God, without whom he must of necessity be miserable. If it be life-eternal to know him, &c. *John 17. 3. i. e. with approbation, and suitable affection: Then to reject him, and finally to reject him, is to be eternally miserable. If there was but one thing in the world would save a mans life; and of all things in the*



the world, he could not away with that : We say that man in an ordinary way, as to means, must die. *Prov. 8. ult, They that hate me, love death*, i. e. by consequence, because it is the inevitable consequent of rejecting God and Jesus Christ.

2. Then men are justly miserable, because they are willingly, and wilfully miserable. They seek not God ; they willingly withstand their own offers that can only make them ; Chuse to refuse God and Christ, and therefore chuse their own damnation. *Psal. 81. 11, 12. But my people (i. e. my visible people) would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me : So I gave them up to their own hearts lusts, and they walked in their own counsels ;* as Christ complains of them afterwards, *John 5. 40, And ye will not come unto me that ye might have life.* Who deserve death, if they do not, that wilfully refuse to have life ; I mean the author and object of it ?

Object. 1. *What necessarily miserable, and justly too ?*

*Answ.* Yea, Consider of it : necessarily miserable, because they chuse not God ; misery must needs be consequent to such an estate ; and justly miserable, because they do wilfully reject him.

Object. 2. *But then it is, because they are necessarily sinful, and yet willingly. How can this be ?*

*Answ.* To make short : Let any man consider whether the Devil be not necessarily wicked, and yet wilfully. God is necessarily good, and cannot be otherwise ; and yet he is most freely so. Besides,  
mans

mans necessity is not a necessity simply, but by reason of the sinful estate he hath brought himself into.

3. They are then mercifully saved, if ever they be saved. If ever they come to heaven, it must be by an act of grace; yea, by many multiplied acts of grace, a gracious power; yea, an exceeding gracious power, *Rom. 11. 32, He hath shut up all under unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all,* i.e. that it might be meer mercy to all them that do believe, *Rom. 9. 18, He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, i.e. by softning their hearts to a Divine compliance. Hosea 13. 9, O Israel, thou hast destroyed thy self, but in me is thy help.*

Object. 1. *But how can God make a man willing, without forcing him, seeing man is Lord of his own act (as they say) the will at least, Domina sui actus?*

*Ans.* 1. It's true, it is so; but under God. No creature can make him will, whether he will or no; he may force his body; but he cannot make him willing, do what he can. But man is not absolute Lord of his own act, but under God. For then he should be the *primum ens*, the first being; or at least, *primum principium*, the first principle; and so there should either be two Absolutes, or man were the first, and not God. *In him we live and move,* Acts 17. 28.

2. God doth effectually move every creature, but according to its capacity, so as to preserve, and not destroy their nature. So voluntary agents he works upon freely; as well the freedom, or the manner of acting, as the acting it self proceeds from God,

God, *Phil. 2. 13, He works in you to will*: God so saves man, as he makes him willing to be saved in his way.

*Object. 2. But if man be unwilling (as is supposed), how can this be without a force? or how can God make him willing, acting in a manner suitable to his nature, which is liberty?*

*Ans. 1. By enlightning the mind: that he shall see with his own eyes, that it is good for him, best in it self, and best for him too. Gal. 1. 15, 16. When it pleased God to reveal his Son in me, (i. e. made me to see what a good Christ was, and how much better it was to serve him) immediately I consulted not with flesh and blood. And all Gods people receive an unction, and they know all things, 1 Joh. 2. 20. And thus far the Remonstrants themselves grant, that God doth irresistably enlighten the mind.*

*2. By infusing a tast, and savour of his goodness and grace. If a man be of a prejudicate opinion concerning things sensible, we say, pray tast, &c. and from this tast their eyes are enlightened (as *Jonathan*, 1 Sam. 14. 27.) that they become of another mind. God prevents his people with these tastes which make them so free, 1 Pet. 2. 3. *If so be that ye have tasted, that the Lord is gracious*, and so that other sense, *Cant. 1. 3, Because of the savour of thy good ointments: Thy name is as ointment poured forth; therefore do the virgins love thee.**

*Object. 3. Though I have said enough, and more I fear than many understand: yet some would farther say: But how is the actual resistance of the will taken down; that so it may appear it is not forced?*

*Ans. 1.*

*Answ.* 1. I have in part shewed already; for by that time these two things are well done, the man is become a new Creature, *created in Christ Jesus to good works*, Eph. 2. 10. But if you enquire *de fieri*, how God doth that, notwithstanding the resistance of the will, (though *quomodo's* may be not only difficult, but dangerous, when to indulge curiosity, or if men suspend their faith for them). Yet to say something for their sakes, who are glad of any satisfaction; I answer,

2. It is easie with God to take off a mans actual resistance to his own good; he can soon lay this asleep; bring a man into that extremity, that he shall think God will undo him presently: though *Paul's* case be extraordinary, taking in all circumstances, *Act.* 9. 6. yet there are many times cases that have some proportion and resemblance. God often brings man into such extremities, upon a sick-bed, or such straits and cramps of Conscience, that they shall presently cry out for peace and truce: Though this may be nothing but the Son of the bond-woman, *Gal.* 4. 30, and the will still where it was, *i.e.* liking, and loving of its lusts, only nature it self labours for self-preservation; and so its actual resistance is taken down.

*Answ.* 3. While the will resists not actually, God throws in a seed of grace into the heart; those sights and tastes, those sensations and favours I told you of before, which rectifie its inclination, and habitually frame; and then there is a new nature, a divine nature, a new will, new heart, new mind, new spirit: and then easie it is, in comparison, to will well. And thus I have shewed you, how it is not of him that willeth, *scil. velle*, to will, nor of him

him that runneth, viz. *currere*, to run, as *Aquinas* glosses it, *Rom.* 9. 16. Or that it is not *ex libero hominum arbitrio, vel humanis conatibus*, of mans free will, or his endeavours (as another upon that place) but of God that shews mercy; that takes away the heart of stone, and gives an heart of flesh, *Ezek.* 36. 26. And how, if ever a man be saved, he must be mercifully and graciously saved.

*Qu. But what hath man to do then?*

*Answ.* To wait on God in that way wherein he uses to do for men, and sinners, and do his utmost herein; to study the mind of God in Scripture, wait daily at Wisdom's gates, &c.

*Object.* 1. *But why do you put men upon doing, and yet tell them, it is the mercy of God must save them?*

*Answ.* 1. But whoever made these two contrary? I put men upon no more than I have alwayes acknowledged they could do; and again say, a meer natural man can do, i. e. use all outward means, and be diligent herein. Whoever denied this, that understood themselves? Doth not daily experience evince, that men can do them if they will; and I appeal to the Consciences of men: Though I must confess, I am apt to think a man may judicially lose much of his aptitude and ability hereunto: Let men look to it.

*Answ.* 2. This doing I call, but waiting upon God (nothing in it self saving) if he may please to do for them; as poor Pensioners and Prisoners wait upon their Lord or Prince to find grace in his sight. Happy for *Lydia*, that ever she came to the place where



where Prayer was wont to be made; for there the Lord opened her heart; *Ab. 6. 13, 14.*

*Object. 2. But thus you make men in a desperate case, even the whole World.*

*Ans. 1.* As to themselves indeed, I do, in a miserable case, without mercy; but not desperate, as to God, who can reconcile enemies, and of them make friends: *Col. 1. 21, Yet now hath he reconciled. He makes things that are not, indeed to be, 1 Cor. 1. 28.* We Preach no absolute despair (God can persuade *Japhet* to dwell in the tents of *Shem*, *Gen. 9. 27*), but self-despair we do: And say again, it is the estate of every man by Nature, that he is undone over and over, as to Law and Gospel: he can neither do acceptably, nor yet believe.

*Ans. 2.* From the deepest sense of misery, many times begins their saving-mercy; the *ultimum non esse*, is many times *principium essendi*; *Hosea 2. 14, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her: I say many times, because all these preparatory works, as sight, and sense of sin and misery, have no necessary connection with the Grace of God, or Regeneration.*

*Question, Pray Sir once more, what way will you set us in?*

*Ans.* Though I have said something already, I further add:

1. Consider seriously of the truth of things; as whether this Doctrine I have Preach'd be truth; and if so, what a Nature thou hast, and what a

condition thou art in; and of the Grace of God, whether it be truth, a reality, and not a fable, &c.

2. Consider of the goodness of things, whether the Grace of God propounded to thee in the Gospel, be not only what is true, but so admirably good, as thou canst no where meet with the like; though thou wanderest in *circuitu*, from one creature to another, one pleasure to another, in the vanity of thy mind never so long; unless thou see'st, and believest this, thou wilt never be free while thou livest.

Object. *But when we have done all, we cannot convince, or persuade our selves.*

Ans. But God can do it: and this with what I have said before, is the ready way hereunto. *Quando nihil rei, aut spei est reliquum, ibi demum incipit auxilium divinum*: when there is no hope left (*i. e.* in our selves); then begins divine help. And thus of the third use.

4. What then hath God done for his people? Concerning this time, it shall be said, *What hath the Lord wrought?* as he said, Numb. 23. 23. They were not able to see to the end of that mercy, it reaches so long, and extendeth so far: for if that people had been destroyed (as *Balack* would have had it), what then had become of all? So concerning this time and thing, it shall be said, *What hath the Lord done?* If man's nature and heart be so pitiful, that it opposes it self to its own great good: What grace is it, that hath turned and altered them? You that have got but one step on this side grace: What salvation hath God shew'd

shew'd you! 'tis as if you should have had the favour to be taken into the Ark, when thousands perished. The revelations of the Gospel, convictions, perswasions, preaching, exhortations; nay Christ himself, would be nothing without this, but the aggravation of thy condemnation; what mercy hast thou found!

5. Then they that seek the Lord, whose hearts seek him in truth, (where there are those underground workings, that the soul secretly goes after God, making a choice, an absolute choice of him) have more in them, than any natural man hath, or can attain to; are partakers of the Grace of God, and out of the deplorable estate of the Text.

6. But to make this more profitable, and the improvement of it to bear some proportion to the moment of the Doctrine: I proceed yet farther. How deeply sensible should this make us (even Gods people and others) of our corrupt Nature! If none seek God naturally, this is Apostacy indeed; this is turning aside, καὶ ἔξοχιν. If man's great end be God, and God his great good and happiness, to turn aside from him, what a lamentable estate does this shew! what a devillish nature! there is none good but God, and we are for any thing but God. How should this turn all high thoughts of our selves into self-contempt, and abomination? This the Law aims at; God gave it on purpose, that man might see himself by it, and sin appear *one of measure* sinful, Rom. 7. 13. *The Law entered, that sin might abound*, Rom. 5. 20. This the Gospel aims at, to debase man, and exalt Christ; on the ruins of nature, and the nullity

of the creature: Christ came to justify the ungodly, Rom. 4. 5. Then the way of the Lord is prepared, when mountains and hills are laid low, Isa. 40. 3, 4, 5. Now we are in the way to have this glory revealed. The best men were most sensible of this corruption, Rom. 7. 24, *I find another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind. O wretched man that I am!* For farther improvement:

Question 1. But may not a person be overmuch sensible of sin?

Answer 1. If by sin, you mean the evil nature of it, you can never be enough sensible of it, *ceteris paribus*; supposing a proportionable faith of the Gospel. It is an evil so contrary to God, the chief good, and so defiling and destructive to the person in whom it is, that it can never be too much understood nor lamented, Rom. 5. 20. Chap. 7. 13.

2. In as much as sin, by the Grace of God, is not an irremissible, or irremediable evil; to be so sensible of it, as to turn our selves aside from the remedy, is overmuch sense of sin, or rather an ill use, or abuse of the sense we have, and a woful perverseness of our nature; for hereby we oppose God, while we seem to comply with him; oppose him in the way of mercy, while we fear him in his justice; and increase sin, while we would seem to magnifie the Law: *To have done all this wickedness, yet turn not aside from following the Lord,* says Samuel, 1 Sam. 12. 20. Rom. 5. 20, *But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.* To aggravate, and extend sin beyond Gospel allowance, is overmuch sense of sin.

1. As if there was more demerit in it; than merit in the blood of Christ: whereas the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin, 1 John 1. 9. It is the blood of God, Acts 20. 28. Your sins (be they what they will), are but the sins of a creature.

2. As if there were more in your sins, than in the Grace of God: as if there were more in your evil, than in the goodness of God. This is ignorance and pride of heart, proceeding from that corruption we are speaking of.

Ans. 4. When the people of God let sin reign and domineer in the Conscience, as if they were children of wrath, and simply under the wrath of God, though they have repented, and are repenting, and have truly applyed the remedy. This is too much, and more than should be: For Rom. 8. 1, *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*: or to count your selves in as ill a case by reason of your remaining sin, as if you did not belong to Christ: this is too much sense of sin. If we practice ill, however let us know it, though it be hard to correct this error.

Ans. 5. When the sense of sin so blinds you, as it makes you disown any good which you have in you in truth, though in a great deal of weakness; this also is too much: As

1. The true acceptance of the Person of a Mediator, in all his Offices: For John 1. 12, *To as many as received him, he gave privilege to become the sons of God.*

2. Hungering and thirsting after righteousness, for such are blessed, Mat. 5. 6.

3. Sincere love to his Name, Eph. 6. 24, *Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.*



## 4. Unfeigned desire of pleasing God. Gal. 1. 10.

Question 2. *When hath a person sufficient conviction, or sense of sin?*

Answer 1. Things are said to be sufficient several ways, as suited and proportioned to several ends; and the same thing is sufficient to one end, which is not to another. As suppose the question were of the sufficiency of Scripture (as in the Dispute between Us and the Papists): in some sense it is sufficient, in others not, *Jam. 1. 21, The word is able to save the soul.* 2 Tim. 3. 15, *Scriptures are able to make wise unto salvation.* But yet the Word alone without the Spirit is not: For the Letter killeth, even the Letter of the *New Testament* without the Spirit; but the Spirit giveth life, 2 Cor. 3. 6. So that it is sufficient in *genere medii externi*, though not in *genere cause efficientis*, as an outward means, or sufficient instrument to that purpose; but not as an inward cause. So the Law is sufficient: To what? To save? no: but to legal humiliation and conviction of sin, *Rom. 3. 20, For by the Law comes the knowledge of sin*; but not to this farther, without the Spirit co-operating, *Rom. 7. 9.* So when we say the Gospel is able to save the soul, or 'tis the power of God to salvation, *Rom. 1. 16.* What? Is it sufficient without any other means using, or course-taking? No sure; yet it is sufficient, *ratione medii particularis*, though it be not *medium universale*; as a particular means it is sufficient, but not alone, to exclude all other. So in this case, conviction, or a sense of sin, is said to be sufficient according to the divers ends which may be propounded.

Answer.

*Ans.* 2. If therefore you mean, what sense of sin is sufficient to expiate sin, or answer the demerit of sin, and the justice of God; then, there is no sense of sin, horror, or trouble in this world sufficient.

*Ans.* 3. If by sufficient, you mean so much sense or conviction of sin ( for I use these promiscuously, though strictly they ought to be distinguished ) as may deserve your conversion, or converting-grace : *i. e.* that God thereby should be necessitated or obliged to give you converting-grace : Then I answer, There is no sufficiency in the greatest measure of conviction, contrition, or humiliation : For then grace would of necessity be given according to our works; which was the error of *Pelagius* of old, and of the *Papists* now-a-days : *Tit.* 3. 5, *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration.*

*Ans.* 4. If you mean when a Christian hath sufficient conviction, sense of sin and humiliation; so as to be nextly disposed or prepared to conversion : I answer, So much as makes thee an absolute lost creature in thy self, is sufficient to be sure, in way of preparation; that, when thou art invited ( as thou art ) to come and receive Jesus Christ, and with him heaven and happiness, and all things, thou shalt not need to strain courtesy, or keep off, because thou art not sufficiently humbled ( as thou thinkest ), but presently and readily take to Christ, and the riches of God's Grace in him, as being a poor lost creature in thy self : *i. e.* every way lost, so as thou canst not so much as come, unless he enable thee : For the great

end of legal humiliation, is to bring the soul from its existence in, and adherence to the Covenant of works, or trusting to its own doings for salvation. What serves to this end, is so far sufficient, *viz.* in way of preparation.

*Ans.* 5. So much as plains the soul for the reception of Christ in all his saving-Offices, is sufficient. If the Law have shewed thee a necessity of Christ for all, *i. e.* to take down the rebellion of thy heart, as well as for any thing else; and thou art legally willing, *i. e.* willing for fear thou shouldst be undone, that it may be so; the Law hath done what it can do for thee. Thou art now to attend what the Gospel says, in which you will see God takes a nothing-creature, and makes Christ all in all to him, *1 Cor. i. 30*, compared with *v. 28*.

6. For a conclusion, I add, An humbled sinners joyful acceptance of, and acquiescence in the proffer of the Gospel, *viz.* Christ proffered, not only for righteousness, but faith also, sanctification, destruction of sin, &c. speaks a soul to have attained what it is seeking after. I say an humbled sinner, because many other will be ready to say so, they do accept, when they know not what they say: But I say, an humbled sinners joyful acceptance, &c. (when it is done, *verbo de presenti*, as they say in the marriage-contract, by a present act, and they do not content themselves with a possibility) shews that they are already partakers of the grace of the Gospel. For,

1. Here is the right object, and the right act, in relation to the object: for what is faith, but a joyful acceptance of a whole Christ.

2. This

2. This is faith in the second moment, *viz.* To live upon Christ for all; why not in the first: Since faith at first, and faith at last, are both of the same nature.

3. Because this frame of heart fully complies with Gods design in the Gospel, and all the offers of his grace. And what is a soul really and readily complying with the Gospel, but one under grace, and not under the law? *Rom. 6. 13, 14.* I know persons may here deceive themselves, that do not sufficiently attend to what I say, and unto the frame of their hearts in this transaction: but whose fault is that?

*Quest. 3. Whether a sight or sense of one sin, be a sufficient preparation to conversion?*

*Answ. 1.* Conviction, and sense of one particular sin, is sometimes initial, or preparatory to conversion, sometimes not. Those, *Act. 2. 36, 37.* When they heard this, *i. e.* how guilty they were in imbruing their hands in the blood of Christ, cried out, *Men and brethren, what shall we do?* And it ended in their conversion: Yet the conviction of the same sin in *Judas* had a very differing issue and event. *Matt. 27. 4, 5.* *I have sinned in betraying innocent blood, and yet he went and hanged himself.*

*Answ. 2.* Consider sin as to the outward act only: And then I do not see, that in a natural tendency, and in an ordinary way, the conviction of one particular sin is sufficient preparation. I'll give you my reason: For as conversion from one single sin, is not conversion properly; so conviction of one particular sin, is not a sufficient preparation

tion to conversion. Because it shews only a necessity of an outward reformation and amendment, and brings not the person to a loss for a whole Saviour, but a partial one only.

*Answ. 3.* God is pleased often to begin here; by the sight and sense of one sin, to lead them on to a self-discovery; and so the conviction of one sin proves initial to, and ends in conversion. Yet I cannot say it is always thus; many that cry out of particular sins, have come no farther towards Christ or Conversion: and that God always begins here, I cannot say: That which slew *Paul*, seems to be that command, *Thou shalt not covet*, Rom. 7. 7, 9. Which discovered to him the lust of his heart.

*Answ. 4.* When a man is made sensible of one sin, not only in the branch or act of it, but in the root also; then it may be preparatory. I mean immediately preparatory to conversion; because then the pertinacy of the heart, and its strong addiction unto sin is hereby discovered, which will urge a necessity of conversion. For this strong addiction to that one sin, shews the strength of original Corruption; what enmity and contradiction to God it carries in it? *Ex. gr.* suppose a man convicted of profane swearing; when this sin is so anatomized by the Spirit of God in conviction, that the person sees and discovers how profane his heart is, how void of all fear of God, not only that of reverence and awe, that he should bear to him, but even of the fear of his Justice, and threatening, that he can despise his word, misbelieve his threatening, condemn his holiness: This shews what a man he is, and what a nature he hath. This man apprehending



hending the grace of God in the Gospel, may be encouraged to come and embrace it.

*Quest. 4. What sense of sin is that which shews a present state in conversion?*

*Ans. 1.* When thou feelest and mournest under it, in consideration of its evil nature, as contrary to the will of God, which is, and ought to be the supream rule and regulation of the creature, *Rom. 7. 14, The law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.*

*Ans. 2.* When thou mournest over it, as against the grace of the Gospel; and so the greatest disingenuity that can be. When thy heart shall reflect upon thee, in this manner or the like: *Dost thou thus requite the Lord, O foolish, and unwise? Deut. 32. 6.* Or as *Absalom* to *Hushai*, *Is this thy kindness to thy friend?* *2 Sam. 16. 17:* As being quite contrary to the love of God in giving his Son, the love of Christ in giving himself, and the love of both in manifesting and revealing themselves unto thee.

*Ans. 3.* When sins adherence, and existence is a burthen to thee. Which manifests thou hast a spirit against it, another spirit than the spirit of the world; which lives and lies in sin. When thou wouldst be glad (all things rightly stated, for some men count those sins which are not) to part with, and be rid of, in thy deliberate thoughts, all, and every evil way and inclination, as a man would be glad to be rid of his burden, *Rom. 7. 24.* More of this will appear in the next particular.

*Quest. 5. Why, what is the difference between sense of*

of sin before conversion, and after conversion?

*Answ. 1.* The one is in relation to God, only as a just Judg; the other as against a gracious Sovereign. God is a just Judg, and therefore it is that persons under conviction, and sense of sin, fear, and mourn. Thus Judas repented, *Matt. 27. 3. i. e.* was desperately sorry he had done the thing, betrayed innocent blood: because God began to judg him presently. Thus, if Judgment was speedily executed, men would be afraid to sin; but never the more against it properly; they might not dare to sin, but love it notwithstanding. But others mourn under it, as against a gracious Sovereign, whose face they have had some sight of in Jesus Christ, apprehending him a God of grace, though they cannot say (possibly) to themselves in particular, *Against thee, thee only have I sinned*, *Psal. 51. 4.*

*Answ. 2.* The one a man would be rid of, the other a Christian would be glad to have more of. The one mans sense of sin, is meerly his bondage: He *hath received the spirit of bondage to fear*, *Rom. 8. 15*, and so he mourns: The others is his freedom, and so accounted, *They shall mourn and be in bitterness, as for an only son*, *Zach. 12. 10.* Take a man in that passion, and you cannot perswade him out of it; it is so sweet to him, *2 Cor. 7. 11*, *That ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what Zeal is wrought in you, yea, what indignation?* Zeal and Indignation are two things men are pleased with, especially for the time. They are pleased with being angry against themselves, and to find their heart imbittered against sin.

*Answ. 3.* The one man casts down himself, the other

other is meerly cast down by God: we find *Ezra weeping and casting down himself*, *Ezra 10. 1.* A convict person meerly suffers under it; but the other is active in it. *Judas* was held down by strong hand, that he could not oppose: but *Peter* went out and wept bitterly, *Matt. 27. ult.*

*Answ. 4.* The one is from a slave meerly, the other from a Son, and something at least of a Son-like spirit: *Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son*, *Luk. 15. 18, 19.*

*Answ. 5.* The one makes a man run from God, the other makes him flee to him; as you see in the prodigal, *I will arise and go to my father*, *Verse 18.* And he arose and came to his father, *Verse 20.* See it in *David*, *Psal. 130. 3.* *If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand? Verse 4,* But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayst be feared: and therefore concludes, *Verse 5,* I wait for the Lord: my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope; and encourages others to do the like, *Verse 7,* Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.

*Answ. 6.* The one hath the mixtures of Faith, the other not. *Judas* either saw nothing of the Saviour he professed; or else believed it not by any such faith as brought down his spirit to be willing to be beholden to him. But those converts, *Acts 2. 41,* Gladly received the word, though they were guilty of the same sin: *For in thee the fatherless find mercy*, *Hosea 14. 3.* This is mixed with their confessions and repentance.

*Answ. 7.* The one man is meerly disturbed in spirit;

spirit; the other is satisfied, and takes content in it. *Paul* under first convictions is in an amazed, frightened condition, *He trembling and astonish'd, said, &c. Acts 9. 6.* But the same *Paul* afterward condemns himself with great delight, *1 Tim. 1. 13, Who was before a blasphemer, persecutor, and injurious; as if he could never speak bad enough of himself, Eph. 3. 8, To me, who am less than the least of all saints, &c. Paul* was not the least of all Saints: For he dare say of himself, *He was not behind the very chief of the Apostles, though he was nothing, 2 Cor. 12. 11.* But he speaks it in relation to what he was formerly, as taking content to debase himself.

*Answ. 8.* The one divides between a man and his sins, the other not. *Ephraim shall say, what have I to do any more with idols? Hosea 14. 8.* Time was *Ephraim* was joyned to idols, *Hosea 4. 17.* But now he renounces them, and all that belongs to them, *Isa. 30. 22. Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven images of silver, and the ornaments of thy molten images of gold: thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, get thee hence. Divides, you shall divide: &c.* This is the thing that troubles and grieves us; we cannot be rid of our sins; they will hang about us. But yet you divide between your selves, and your selves, as two parties, *Rom. 7. 20. If I do what I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.* Here is, *I do, and I do not: I do, but it is against my will that I so do; and yet, not altogether against my will, for then I should not do it at all.* Here are two parties divided. *Uterus Rebecca gestat discordes. Rebecca's womb bears men of differing Tempers and Inclinations.*

*Answ. 9.*

*Ans.* 9. The one commends and endears Jesus Christ, and the grace of God, *Rom. 7. ult, I thank God through Jesus Christ.* He had been complaining, *Vers. 24, O wretched man that I am:* That Christ had delivered him in part, and would deliver him; this makes him so praiseful, and Christ so precious: the other not.

*Quest. 6. Whether may, and ought a Christian to grow in the sight and sense of sin?*

*Ans.* For answer, I lay down these positions.

1. Sin is so great an evil, as can never be sufficiently understood or bewailed. It is so exceeding sinful, that the best Saint on earth never saw the utmost of the evil of it, *i. e.* the utmost degree of its wickedness. For they must first know how good, and how great God is, against whom it is, before they can know that: And *there is no finding out the almighty, Job 11. 7.*

2. God doth not commonly bestow all at once, that he hath to give of spiritual blessings. For his design is to have a Christians life, a state of dependence, *1Pet. 2. 4, 5, To whom coming as unto a living stone: ye also as lively stones are built up.* Therefore it is, that we have as well promises of growth, as Commands to grow.

3. Sight and Sense of sin is one great spiritual blessing, and makes those that have it more spiritual. I mean, such a sight especially, as shews us together with the extent, the evil nature of it. *Mark, Psal. 97. 10, Te that love the Lord, hate evil.* Then by way of proportion, they that love the Lord most, should hate evil most. And it is not bated, but from sight or sense. Had we only *Pauls* example



example for it, would it not prove, that a person most sensible of sin in this kind, were the most spiritual Christian? *Rom. 7. 24.* But is it not clear, when we can discover more, and less bear that which to God is most intolerable? We are apt to think sense of sin belongs only to a preparatory work and state of Bondage; and consequently that we have no more to do with it afterwards; and if we have, it is only our bondage: And hence some (though without all ground) conclude themselves in a Christless condition. But this is a great mistake; though it be in another manner after conversion than before: It is a sense of the same thing, though not the same sense of the thing altogether.

4. We have not so much at first, especially some, at least in that manner, but we had need give great diligence hereunto, lest we be cast and overgrown. And I mean, not only of the evil nature of sin, (for this I count we have nothing of before) but of its indwelling, close adherence, extent, &c. And indeed I cannot see, but that sight and sense we have of sin after conversion, is wholly of another kind, though both introduced by the same spirit, the one in a way of common working, the other in a way of special grace. Which may be the reason why some Christians complain not so sensibly of their own evil, and emptiness, as before under meer legal workings; though they have better convictions now, yet not proportionably greater. He that hath most, hath not enough: For *quantum barathrum sit sola incredulitas?* what an abyss is unbelief alone? Strong convictions of our own vileness and self-emptiness,  
*ceteris*

*conferis paribus*, together with the discoveries of the Gospel and Faith in them, what Christians would they make! For the ordinary way of Christs coming to the heart, is by humiliation and self-emptying.

But here I must give you these Items:

*Item 1.* Be as careful to grow in the conviction of the Gospel, and sins against the Gospel, as of other sins. For these belong to your natural corruption, and will discover as great an enmity, *Joh. 16. 8, 9, 10, He shall convince of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, &c.*

*Item 2.* Give diligence to secure, and assure your interest in the Gospel; for these two things put together, cut off, or abate those terrors which use to accompany conviction in a state of bondage, *2 Pet. 1. 10, Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.*

*Question 7. But in what sense is it to be understood, when you say we must grow in the sense of this corrupt nature?* *Ans.* To answer in a few words.

1. As to the extensiveness of it, *i.e.* how it is spread over the face of the soul, as a Leprosie that over-runs all: What natural evils, unnatural, diabolical, spiritual wickednesses? pride, rage, murmuring, unbelief, doubting of God and his truth, blasphemies, these dwell in thy heart. Consider the Apostles Catalogue, *Gal. 5. 19, 20, 21.* Whether those works of the flesh do not all dwell in thee, and live in thee, though thou livest not in them: and though thou find not all in thy temper, see whether thou find'st them not in thy nature.

2. As to the intensiveness; their deep radicaton, their strong-hold, their great possession, the close adherence, *Rom. 7. 24.* This conviction is that which doth a Christian the greatest courtesie of any I know of this kind; and would mightily engage the soul for firm adherence unto Christ, that knows the Gospel.

3. As to the evil nature of it, or in relation to the motives of your sense and sorrow, or what it is that makes it so evil to you; and see that those be more solid, more spiritual. Many take on, and are very much troubled at sin: but many times there is very much of self in it, and legal motives.

*Object. Why, Hath not a Christian seen himself lost? had so much sight and sense of sin? How then can he have more, at least need more?*

*Ans.* 1. A more confused sight he may have had, but not so distinct, possibly, and clear at least, as he may have afterwards, and should endeavour for. What distinct sight and sense of sin, *Lydia*, or the *Jaylor*, or *Zacheus* had, I know not: a confused sight they might have, and distinct in some particulars; as the *Jaylor* of his cruelty, and *Zacheus* of his extortion, &c. *Acts 16. 14,* and *ver. 29, 30, 31. Luke 19. from 1, to 11.* I deny not but it might be distinct also, more universally, though of a sudden; but I do not know that so it was.

*Ans.* 2. If you mean such a sight of himself from the word, as is not meerly speculative, but influential upon the heart, to affect it; (in which sense *Mr. Ames* says, all divine knowledge hath experience

perience accompanying it ) : I say, this is such as needs to be confirm'd and follow'd, whatever it be, faith, or experience: *Vid. Ames de lum. nat. & gr.*

*Answ.* 3. Those that have the most distinct work of conviction, sense of sin, and their own lost estate; yet had need give diligence hereunto, though they have lyen long under such and such methods of conviction, and saw they could not but sin, at least in heart; and though they sinned, yet they could not be humble, though they were humbled, nor believe, notwithstanding both; yet, they had need attend, 1<sup>st</sup>, Unto Scripture revelation concerning the same thing. 2<sup>dly</sup>, To the Spirits discoveries, or convictions of them. 3<sup>dly</sup>, To the daily experience of their own heart. They had need have them better grounded, and in a better manner settled: for I cannot see the light before conversion, and the light after, both of one kind.

*Answ.* 4. If a Christian see the *ultimum malum*, I mean no more than that which will conclude him absolutely lost; yet not the *ultimum mali*: he is far from seeing the utmost degree of its evil.

*Answ.* 5. Sense of sin, is either direct, or consequential, *viz.* of what I find directly working, or what I gather from what I find by spiritual Argumentation; which because it depends upon sense, may therefore be called sense, though not directly so apprehended, but by Argumentation arising from sense, *Ex. gr.* I find the reflex beams of the Sun are hot, therefore I conclude by reason, help'd by experience, that the direct are hot also. To the case in hand, I find my heart in such and such a particular, deceitful, and desperately

wicked, therefore I conclude it is so in the like; because there is the same common reason of one and the other, where the same interest is involved.

*Quest. 8. How should a Christian do to grow in the sight and sense of his natural corruption, i. e. in the discovery of the evil nature of it, intention, extension, and also to be more and more affected with it?*

*Ans. 1. By attending to the rule, and the spirits enlightning that, i. e. helping thee to understand the true sense and meaning of it, Rom. 7. 7, 9, I had not known sin, but by the Law. And how came he to know the Law? by the spirit; when the Law came, i. e. when the spirit brought it home. The Gospel is a rule also, to which thou must attend for the discovery of Gospel-sins, Mat. 14. 31, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?*

*Ans. 2. By self-reflection, and attendance to the heart, compared with the rule: How would you know sin in any action, but by comparing it with the law and rule, which commands or forbids such and such things? Is not attendance then to the stirrings and workings of your heart, contrary to the rule; the way to know your sinful nature, Rom. 7. 14, The Law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. Verse 21, When I would do good, evil is present with me. How did he know what was good, but by the rule? How did he know he would do good, but by observation of himself, in compare with the rule? So how did he know evil, but by the rule? How did he know evil was present, but by attendance to his own heart, and what he found striving there?*

*Ans. 3.*



*Ans.* 3. By observation or notice-taking how it is with us, when God withdraws his influence at any time more or less: for while we are assisted and strengthened, we less attend, and are less able to distinguish what nature contributes, and what grace: Therefore it is, God so often leaves us more or less, that we may see what we are of our selves, to humble us, and kill our pride; to mortifie self-conceit, and self-trust. Then the Church cries, *Why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our hearts from thy fear?* Isa. 63. 17. How does God make them, but by withdrawing at such a time? Therefore consider we how backward, how listless, how dead, how unbelieving, how unaffected we are: what pride, what sensual inclinations stir in us: this is the way to grow in self-sense. Again, observe we how it is with us in time of temptation; when God suffers the Devil to winnow us, and neither gives light to know what to do, nor faith and courage to resist him: How the heart would move us to a provoking dis-regard of God; what quarrelling, crossness, doubting of his truth and goodness, calling him to question for his dealings with us. And this is the way to gain by temptation, and learn Divinity by the Devil, as he said.

*Ans.* 4. By anatomizing and resolving things into their principles, where you may see the root of your passion, is your pride. What? you dealt with so and so? the root of much disquietment (not that this is the only thing); your unbelief in great measure, as betraying the succours of grace, the word of God, &c. your discontentment may shew you, that you have the same Leaven,

ven, are of the same spirit with the very Devils. Thus *Paul* resolves his doing, and his not doing, into his evil nature, *Rom. 7. 18, For I know that in me, i. e. in my flesh, dwells no good.* Thus *James* resolves their brawlings into their lusts, *Jam. 4. 1.*

*Object. 1. How can these discover any thing to a Christian, of his nature, seeing they are but passions and infirmities, at least, in a Christian? As David, Psal. 116. 11, I said in my haste, &c. Psal. 77. 10, But I said, This is my infirmity: How then can they give any true account of the heart, the nature?*

*Answ. 1. No Do? not passions and affections give an account of the heart, they proceed from? How could such fruit come, but from many bitter roots that are there? and such streams flow, but from a corrupt Fountain? especially considering the pleasingness of them; the perpetuity and constancy; that every day, upon all occasions, they find their heart thus prone to one thing or other? Now what does a constant proneness shew, but a naturalness? Though grace in a Christian takes down the predominancy, yet you may find your aptness and proneness; which is the thing I speak of. If any say on their behalf, they were contracted; these, and such like were contracted before grace.*

*Answ. 2. How come they to be so bad, to contract such a natural madness? What wild creatures were they to contract them? Which speaks the thing I would prove; they are wild by nature.*

*Answ. 3. This must be understood of all the evils in the soul of man, that they are so contracted: whereas many never came into practice; and*

and what at first put men upon such actings, but sinful inclinations?

*Ans.* 4. I ask a natural man ( for those I have to deal with in this Objection, though for the benefit of others ), would you help it, or would you not? and I speak not of passions and affections, as to the outward acts only, but as to their principles and inward stirrings; and this must be extended also to every one of them ( for the heart of sin may be contracted into one ); I say then, Would you help it, or would you not? If not: this speaks the perverseness of nature, and that your will is excentrical, even as to the *elicit* acts: If you say you would, but cannot; this shews how weak you are, and that your will is lost as to its *imperate* acts. Natural men are enemies to deliberation and better advice; they are all passion: I say therefore to a Christian again, follow the streams of your heart unto their Fountain.

5. By Observation, how your help comes in. Are you ever free, unless *the Son make you free*? *John* 8. 36. Free from sin, and free to righteousness, under the stirrings of corruption, unless God discover himself gracious, willing and ready to accept and help you, enlighten your mind, renew your purposes and resolutions, strengthen your hatred and antipathy, fortifie your courage and magnanimity: Have you any relief or liberty at all? Mark I say which way your help comes in: if it be all by grace, according to those Scriptures, *Phil.* 4. 13; *I can do all things through Christ which strengthneth me*: and *John* 15. 5, *Without me ye can do nothing*: then you have none by nature, which leads you whither I am directing you.

6. By acting faith upon the promises of the Gospel for light and sense, as a Christian must be always attending to carry on a Gospel-sense of sin, and kindly humiliation for it; so he must act faith in the promises to that end. To instance in a few, *Isa. 54. 13, And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord*, i. e. not only concerning Jesus Christ himself (as he applies it, *John 6. 45*), but every other matter of spiritual concernment, *Zach. 12. 10, I will pour upon them the spirit of grace and supplication, and they shall mourn.*

7. By the observation and experience of others: For *as in water face answers to face, so the heart of man to man*, *Prov. 27. 19.* Another mans heart will tell you your own; and his actions, his heart, as the water will represent your own face to you: 'Tis easie to see and observe *how the world lies in wickedness*, *1 John 5. 19.* There is no evil almost but walks abroad in view, in the person of one or other: Whence comes this, but from a corrupt abominable nature? *Mat. 15. 19, Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, lusts, false witness, blasphemies:* You will say from an evil habit: but how come men to be so wicked, to acquire such habits? What put them upon such actions as before? Whence are those actions, but from evil inclinations? And whence such inclinations, but from an evil nature? Their hearts incline them that way, therefore they run. Take the most moderate instances of natural men, from one to another, from the least to the greatest; you may observe they are all ignorant of what they should know; heartless to any thing that is spiritually good, and cannot be prevailed with

with, to be otherwise. You may possibly perswade some men to do something (others you cannot prevail with thus far, to take any pains); but to love it, or addict themselves to it, as their life, it is in vain to talk of it. Thus by other men, you may learn your selves; and by their actions, your heart; and so much wisdom by their folly. For a conclusion of this discourse.

*Qu. 9. Do men seek God first, or God seek them first?*

For answer in general, I must mind you, how in the beginning of this discourse, I distinguished betwixt seeking in a way of means-using, formal, outside-seeking; and seeking properly, or seeking in truth. Then particularly, I answer first:

1. If by seeking, you mean meer formal seeking, or in a way of means-using: Thus, even thus, God seeks, and finds men first; by bestowing upon them the means of grace. He thus prevents, even the Heathen-world, by entailing the Scriptures, and the means of grace upon them, *Psal. 147, 19, 20. He sheweth his word unto Jacob: his statutes, and his judgments unto Israel: he hath not dealt so with any nation, Matt. 21. 43, The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation, bringing forth the fruit thereof: The Kingdom of God, i. e. the means of the Kingdom, by a metonymy, shall be taken away. Who takes it away? The answer is easie; then who gave it them? or who gives it to another nation? Even the Eunuch, Act. 8. 27, who came so far, as from Saba in Aethiopia, to Jerusalem, (which by computation is near a thousand Miles, plus minus) though he seem'd to seek God first;*



first; yet God first sought him, and found him: For, 1. The report must come to his ears, that the word and worship of God was at *Jerusalem*: And then who inclined his heart, to undertake so long a journey? *Isa. 65. 1, I said, behold me, behold me, to a nation that was not called by my name.*

Object. 1. *But men, though they have the means of grace, might not use them for all that?*

Ans. But either by some civil or moral inducement, or some conviction of the spirit, he keeps them to the means.

2. If by seeking, you mean in truth, and with a perfect heart (as Scripture phraseth it) then God seeks them first, ere they can seek him, *Hos.*

3. ult. *Afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and shall seek the Lord, and David their King,* i. e. Jesus Christ. And this shall be in truth; because it is joyned with the fear of the Lord, *And shall fear the Lord, and his goodness, in the latter dayes.* I ask now; doth God that makes promises, make them good? Or doth man make God perform his promise? It must be the effect of an absolute promise, that such obstinate Creatures should return: As you may farther clearly see it expressly made to this people, *Ezek. 36. 26. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.* See also to the same purpose, *Zach. 12. 10.* And abundantly more I might alledg: But I am willing now to dismiss this Doctrine.

CHAP. XI.

Verf. 3. **T**hey are altogether become filthy. There are three significations of the word, 1. *Putruerunt, sorduerunt, corrupti erant, vel facti sunt, putridi*; which we may render corrupt, rotten. 2. *Putidi vel fœtidi facti sunt*, stinking, as in the Margin; filthy as in the Text. 3. And thereupon the holy Ghost renders it, *Rom. 3. 12. Inutiles, They are become unprofitable*. All these depend, and are consequential each to other. The Metaphor is taken from Meat which is first putrid or rotten, thereupon stinking and filthy, and so unprofitable, that it is good for nothing, but to be cast to the dunghil. Because the holy Ghost extends the signification of the word, so shall I.

Observ. 1. *Natural men are so corrupt, that they are therefore loathsome to God, good for nothing, or unprofitable.*

The subject of the proposition is the same we have been speaking of all this while; for we have no other in the Text. But here is a threefold predicate.

1. Corrupt, or rotten: In a word or two I shall shew you: First what is corruption in the general. 2. Accommodate it to our present matter.

1. Corruption in general is the pravity of the qualities of any thing, whence begins its destruction.

on. An apple is then said to be rotten, when its juice is turned into bad. Or (to keep to the Metaphor before us), Meat is then said to be corrupt, when the wholsom pleasant juice, that was fit for nourishment, is changed into the contrary.

2. To the case in hand. Corruption in man is his degeneracy in that which once was his greatest excellency; or the loss and want of those qualities, properties, habits, or divine nature (as the Apostle calls it) which was his greatest perfection; by which under the first Covenant he was acceptable to God, and pleasant in his sight: And instead thereof, having contracted a vicious nature and inclination, by reason of which, they are very loathsom and offensive, stinking, filthy, as in the Text. They have not lost either nature, or good nature (in the common acceptation of the word) which in many men gives a great varnish and set-off to what they do. But the best natur'd man in the world hath lost his rectitude, and good nature; and is ill-natur'd, and ill-humour'd towards God. You may remember when I spake to this out of *vers.* 1, *They are corrupt*, having explained in what sense it was to be taken; I gave you no other than a Scripture-account of the thing: But I now insist in another manner.

3. Therefore if you ask how this degeneracy, this corruption doth appear: I answer,

1. By their not minding naturally, and pleasantly, any thing of worth and excellency. They have their humours for every thing else almost: but for God they are never in humour, never in frame. If at any time they be in a fit, or good mood

mood (as they say), this never settles into a habit, or a naturalness God-ward; as passions and humours in other things often do. There is nothing a man minds, or regards in relation to Gods glory, or the perfecting of his soul; the accomplishing his happiness here, or for ever. No wisdom is before the eyes of him that hath understanding, sayes Solomon, Prov. 17. 24. i. e. solid, substantial wisdom, sound wisdom, as it is rendred, Prov. 3. 21. But they are men of no understanding, as before, Prov. 18. 1. *A man through desire having separated himself, intermedleth with all wisdom*, i. e. sound wisdom, and discretion: But fools despise wisdom and instruction, Prov. 1. 7. i. e. they have no esteem for it; but a secret, if not an open derision of it. And who are these fools? The very men I am speaking of, such as have not the fear of the Lord, as clearly appears in the opposition: *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*; but fools despise, i. e. such as have no fear of God. Which the Apostle charges every natural man with, Rom. 3. 19, *There is no fear of God before their eyes*. If they mind any thing of Knowledge, it is either not of the best things (but matters of lesser moment in religion); or if at all busie about the best, it is in such a superficial airy manner, that it is nothing they would be nourished by, or live upon, but only to maintain opinion, or discourse, &c. Their knowledge puffs up, and does not perfect. It is so much only as pleases their fancy; and every mans fancy is according to himself. With naturalness, or pleasingness to mind any thing of spiritual worth or excellency, This they will not: and if this will not shew a man, what will?

2. It appears in that they are wholly taken up in matters of little moment and concernment; the world, and the things of the world. Because I mentioned this before, I shall not stay here, *Phil. 3. 19, They mind earthly things* *φρονέσι*, the word implies both the plotting of the mind, and the relish and savour of heart and affections. That this is meant of men in the visible Church, is clear; and that it is to be extended to every natural man, appears also by the opposition, *vers. 20, But our conversation is in heaven.*

3. It appears by their listlessness, and injudiciousness in matters of their Soul and Salvation. The smallest matters in Religion are made the greatest account of; as matters of ceremony, and outward performance; as hearing, praying in secret, or with their families, sacraments, &c. These they would seem to have some heart for, *Isa. 58. 2, Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: They ask of me the ordinances of justice, they take delight in approaching to God.* Here in truth God represents them as a people unrighteous, though so much taken up with the means of grace, and outward ceremonies. For they were far enough from the end, or the means in the right use of them; To grace, and gracious actings, or performing duties in a gracious manner, they are blind and listless.

4. It appears by their practical ignorance, and disgust of the main saving mysteries of the Gospel. As,

1. Of the mystery of Jesus Christ, as the Apostle calls it, *Col. 3. 2. They can make nothing of it.*



it: or if they do, they wholly disgust it. To be so near Christ, as to be one with him in a mystical union, or truly moral either, they cannot indure to think on. For Christ *to be believed on in the world, is one of the mysteries* the Apostle makes great without controversie, 1 Tim. 3. 16. They cannot apprehend him such a precious stone, such a corner-stone: And therefore to them he is *a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence*, 1 Pet. 2. 6, 7, 8.

2. By their practical ignorance and disgust of the way of faith. *To eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood; this is a hard saying*, Joh. 6. 53, compared with *vers. 60*. When Christ saw his hearers were offended at this, he explains it, *vers. 63, It is the spirit that quickens; the flesh profits nothing*, i. e. they are to be understood spiritually: (For what if a man should eat the very flesh of Christ, as they seemed to understand it; would this save him? much less will the sacramental bread alone), *q. d.* Christ as incarnate and crucified, is to be received, and inwardly digested by the soul that would be saved. Yet for all this, they went back, they believed not; and Christ knew so from the beginning: *Therefore said I unto you, No man can come unto me, except it was given unto him of my father*, *q. d.* You never did from first to last rightly understand or believe; nor now have you any mind to it. Shall I add, but it is not given to natural men of the Father, *Ergo?*

3. By their practical ignorance of regeneration, and enmity to it. *How can these things be*, sayes Nicodemus? Joh. 3. 9. He seems to be a moderate man;

man; to have some inclinations to hear; and not to come with a desire to cavil; he was a learned man, *a master in Israel*, *vers. 10.* And yet he is at this rate, and that not at first only, as *vers. 4,* *How can a man be born, when he is old, &c.* But at last, though Christ had explained it, proved it, shewed him the reason of it, *vers. 6,* *That which is born of the flesh, is flesh:* Yet at last he cries out, *How can these things be? Nicodemus* alone lies not under this imputation of ignorance, but all the carnal hearers in the world, even every natural man. Mark therefore how Christ turns it, *vers. 12,* *If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, &c.* They were not earthly, but ipiritual things Christ had spoken of, yet they were but earthly; or elementary in comparison of what he could have spoke. Yet not only *Nicodemus*, but others are charged with ignorance and unbelief. *If I have told you and ye believe not, &c.* *Whosoever is born of God, sayes John, doth not commit sin, 1 Joh. 3. 9.* For his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. The seed of God in him, makes it impossible for him to sin as other men sin, with full and free consent; absolute delight, and purposed continuance. Let these things be made good of a natural man, and then we shall have some reason to think well of him. So much for the fourth particular.

5. It appears by their facility and proneness to all that is evil and wicked; and not only that which is evil in circumstance, *Luk. 6. 45,* *An evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil, &c. &c.* as naturally as a tree

tree

tree doth its fruit. But is every natural man, this evil man? yea, if he as naturally bring forth evil: but so he doth; or else he is naturally good; and so naturally brings forth good things, *Rom. 1. 29, Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, &c.* But these were judicially so, you'll say. But doth God in Judgment put wickedness into mens hearts? Though therefore by Gods withdrawing his preventing-grace, it had more vent; yet it was there before. To say they contracted them; is but to say what I say: For they must have hearts full of wickedness to contract them, graceless hearts, prone to them; had they had *any seed of God*; they could not have been at that rate. *1 Joh. 3. 9, His seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin:* But look a little forward to the next Chapter, *Rom. 2. 1*; and you will see every man under the same condemnation. *Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whatsoever thou art, that judgest: for thou that judgest, dost the same things.* How so? What, every man alike? What, every natural man chargeable with that black Catalogue? Yea, because his heart and inclination is the same: and therefore according to Scripture-phrase he is said to do the same thing. The Jews, though they would easily grant the Gentiles were bad enough, and would judg them, *i. e.* condemn them; yet they counted better of themselves. But the Apostle makes them all alike as to the propensions of their nature.

6. This appears, because they lay their foundation upon the Sands; and take up with any thing; something at least which is not solid.

1. Generally and ordinarily with their own  
O pre-

presumptions. They *have confidence in the flesh*, Phil. 3. 3, 4, almost any thing will serve turn. He that hath least to say, yet thinks he hath enough.

2. With a form of godliness ; this is common, 2 *Tim.* 3. 5, *Having a form of godliness, yet denying the power.*

3. With checks of conscience, convictions, and legal sorrow.

4. With some essays and endeavours only, in a way of means-using, after Christ and Grace, 2 *Tim.* 3. 7, *Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

5. With some meer passionate, unaccountable meltings, without any ground or reason ; as crying at a Sermon. Though it might possibly as well have hapned at some Tragedy.

6. With some mens say-so, and good thoughts of them ; while *the prophet speak peace, peace*, Jer. 6. 14.

7. With some mistaken, or misapplied Scriptures.

8. With some kind of joy, and transports only, *Matt.* 13. 20.

9. With some kind of common enlargements, *Heb.* 6. 4, 5.

10. With strong fancy and imagination, without any Scripture-ground.

11. With sudden impulses, and impressions ; though they know not whence they are.

12. With a meer blaze, and lamp of profession ; lamps without oyl, *Matt.* 25. 7. And there are two things which make it so, *i.e.* make them so ready to take up with that which is unsound.

1. A deceitful heart, which is deceitful above all things, Jer. 17. 9. Which place some explain relatively to the business in hand. For the Prophet had blessed those that trust in the Lord, vers. 7, trust; yea, they trusted in the Lord. The Prophet answers, *The heart is deceitful above all things.* Isa. 44. 20, *A deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, is there not a lie in my right hand?*

2. A willingness to take up with any thing but the truth, Rom. 1. 28, *Even as they liked not to retain God in their knowledge, &c.* Vers. 18, *That hold the truth in unrighteousness,* κατεχόμενοι detinentium seu supprimentium veritatem. Therefore it is, men run from this opinion to that; run through all Religions (as the vulgar speak) because they would avoid the truth, and run from that which hath Foundation. Therefore it is, men feed upon Husks, as the prodigal, rather than return to their Father.

7. They are properly workers of iniquity; and evil-doers in Scripture-phrase, and Scripture-sense: They are properly *Pognaleaven πορνείας, ἡν ἀμαρτίαν, καὶ ἡγιασμένους ἡν ἀνομίαν*, Psal. 5. 6. 1 Joh. 3. 7. Matt. 7. 23. For these phrases denote two things, 1. *Actum continuum*, a continued act; 2. *Naturalitatem actus*, the naturalness of the act:

1. A continued act, and so natural men are continually sinning; if not in acting, or plotting, yet in the inclination, and tendency of their heart; working iniquity, doing iniquity, to render it properly. Even then, when they forbear to sin, they do not forbear for Gods sake, or sins sake,



Gen. 6. 5, *Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

2. The naturalness of the act, Jer. 6. 7. *As a fountain casteth out her waters, so she casteth out her wickedness,* i. e. naturally, freely. From this the Apostle James proves, they that so do, cannot be good, James 3. 11, *Doth a fountain send forth both fundit, at the same place, sweet water, and bitter,* i. e. naturally, freely? 1 Joh. 3. 7, *He that doth righteousness, is righteous, ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην,* i. e. *studio & industria,* with study and endeavour. He that so doth not, on the contrary is unrighteous. Thus of this first particular, wherein I have been longer than I thought.

2. The second part of the Doctrine. Natural men, or men naturally, are *fœtidi, putidi,* stinking, loathsom; such as God can by no means away with. Where I shall shew, 1. What this implies. 2. That they are so. Which will carry things a little farther than yet I have directly done. For though I have shewed how the works of a natural man are all abominable; yet not directly, how God resents their persons.

1. It implies that he owns them not. He doth neither count them, nor use them as his friends, or in any special relation unto him, as his people are. The poorest, weakest of his Servants he owns. It is said, not only of the Patriarchs, *He was not ashamed to be called their God,* Heb. 11. 16; but of Jacob, worm Jacob, i. e. Jacob's posterity in a low condition: *I am with thee, I am thy God,* Isa. 41. 10. Many a smile, many a good look of countenance and encouragement, many a good word, many a friendly converse,

verse, some of his find from him. Yea, he is always friendly to them; even then, when he seems an enemy; though not to sense, but to faith. But natural men are at a distance from all these, *a people afar off*; (That is their description, *Ephes. 2. 13.*) from what? from God, from Covenant, from Blessedness; God hath no delight in them.

2. Not only so, but he positively rejects them, *Jer. 2. 37, The Lord hath rejected thy confidences, and thou shalt not prosper in them*: Thee and thy confidences, or thee with them, *i. e.* their trust, and carnal hopes, and helps. *Psal. 119. 119. Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross.*

3. And that with loathing and indignation, *Psal. 50. 16, 17. But to the wicked God says, What hast thou to do to take my covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction? &c.* He meets him in fury, speaks to him in his wrath. See *Ezek. 14. 7. I shall conclude it with that to Laodicea, Rev. 3. 16. So then, because thou art luke-warm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth*: How loathsome such a people are to God!

2. I now come to clear it, that every natural man is thus loathsome and offensive.

1. If a sinful action be so, much more a sinful person; because he is the subject of many sinful actions, according to that *1 Sam. 24. 13, Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked.*

2. If an evil action be loathsome, much more an evil inclination; for an evil inclination is prolific, and the seed of many evil actions: *As a*

*fountain sendeth forth her waters* : So is an evil inclination to evil actings. But the inclination is the inclination of the person : therefore persons naturally ill-inclined must needs be loathsome. If you would bear with a person that had wronged you once ; you would not endure to harbour a born Thief in your house.

3. If an evil action be loathsome, much more a Trade, and course of them ; and therefore the person so condition'd. The natural man drives on a trade and course of sinning ; he is *ὁμοιωτὴν ἁμαρτίαν*. 1 Joh. 3. 8, as before.

4. If an evil action be loathsome, much more an heart full of evil actions and inclinations, *Psal. 5 9, Their inward part is very wickednesses.*

5. Scripture judges the persons of sinners, not only the works of sin, *Psal. 5. 6, Thou hatest all workers of iniquity.*

6. Paul complains of *the sin that dwells in him*, Rom. 7. 20. as making him, simply considered, loathsome, not only to God, but himself, *Vers. 24, O wretched man that I am ! &c.* If that be sin which dwells in a man, and the cause and fountain of all others ; then for this, every natural man is hateful, and loathsome to God. Remember I am speaking here not of actual reprobation, or the execution of Justice ; but the exposedness of the person, *statu quo*, in that condition, and Gods present actual loathing.

7. And lastly : Natural men must be acceptable to God ( if at all ) either in the way of the first Covenant, or the second ; not in the first, for they are graceless ( as we have been proving all along ) and so cannot stand in the Covenant of works ;

works; nor in the second, because they are Christless, as well as graceless. And so I leave it, and proceed to the third thing in the Doctrine.

*Part 3.* Natural men are unprofitable, or good for nothing, *ὄνησιμος* (as the Apostle renders it, *Rom. 3. 12.*) They are of no use according to the signification of the word. To understand this, consider: A thing is either, 1. Simply of no use at all. Or 2. relatively of no use for what it was appointed. A Watch which had been made with great Art and Industry, if in every motion of it, from the spring to the least Wheel, it be irregular, it is good for nothing, *i. e.* to the end, for which it was made: Though the materials, silver or gold, &c. be useful for many things. Thus natural men are unprofitable.

1. Because unprofitable to God. Man was made to serve him, and honour him, *Job 28. 28,* *And to man he said, The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, &c. Matt. 4. 10, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* But natural men are all drones, cyphers, of no use to God, *Matt. 20. 6, Why stand ye here all the day idle?* Take them in their natural posture, and they stand all with their hands in their pockets. None work but those whom God sends into his vineyard, *Isa. 5. 4, Wherefore when I looked it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes: And this vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant, vers. 7.*

Object. 1. *Why, who can be profitable to God?*

Can a man be profitable to God, as he that is wise may be profitable to himself? *Job 22. 2.*

*Ans.* Being profitable, is either, 1. By accumulation or addition, and so many in that Text: For how is a wise man profitable to himself? Is it not by adding something to himself? As it is explained, *vers. 3.* Is it gain to him that thou makest thy wayes perfect? Thus no man can be profitable to God; but this is not the end for which he was made: Or, 2. by manifestation. And this is that for which man was made, *Prov. 16. 4, He made all things for himself.* Thus no natural man is profitable, or can be, *i. e.* he cannot be active in the manifesting of his glory; though be he as wicked as he will, God will glorifie himself upon him.

*Object. 2. No? Are no natural men profitable to God? Do they not do a great deal of good in the world?*

*Ans.* 1. Some do indeed; though many be meer drones, and spend-thrifts. There are some wise men, some painful men, that may do a great deal of good in the Families, Towns, States, and Kingdoms where they live; because all activity is not lost, but only activity for God. They are not actively and intentionally profitable, or useful to God; though God make use of what they do for his glory, and the good of the world. So it is only eventually they are profitable, *Hos. 10. 1. Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit to himself.* What an empty vine, and bring forth fruit? Yea, so long as it was all to himself; and it was so, because his Religion was meer policy,



licy. A vine is profitable when it yields fruit to him that dresses it, 1 Cor. 9. 7.

2. Because a natural man is unprofitable to himself; nay, *a man may be profitable to himself*, Job says, Job 22. 2. Yea, a wise man may in something or other, some way or other. In a sense, natural men are profitable to themselves; but then you must make themselves little besides body and carcase; this they may heap up and lay together: But Christ throws down all this with one word, *What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his soul?* Matt. 16. 26. And yet, for what a poor pittance of this world do men lose their souls for ever? That is clear gain then that profits the soul. Thus natural men do themselves no good, nor can: *For they are a nation void of counsel, neither is there any understanding in them*, Deut. 32. 28. *Oh that they were wise*, says God, v. 29.

If natural men be so corrupt, then, 1. They are past mans cure; it is a most deplorable case to see men under the Preaching of the Gospel to be little the wiser, and nothing the better: But *who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one*, Job 14. 4. If the humours of a man's body be all corrupt, he needs a Physician that can raise the dead: *That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit, is spirit*, John 3. 6. It must be the Spirit of God alone, can preach such men to God.

2. Then those men go an ill way to work, that take it for granted, and presuppose there is something in nature to recover it self; there is indeed natural understanding, and natural will; but

but there is no integrity, no soundness in them; and can therefore educe nothing spiritual. This is but to nurse men in a presumptuous self-confidence, *Ezek. 16. 2, Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations.*

3. At what a loss does this make the poor sensible sinner? he can neither do for himself, nor any way deserve that God should do any thing for him; he must be absolutely beholding to the Grace of God, and the Redemption of Christ, to make a cure for him, *i. e.* to do all the spiritual part of the work; to renew and regenerate his heart, though he must use all means, as a man in a sad condition would.

4. This may cease that dismay and astonishment Gods people are apt to be in, under the discovery of their own heart. Whatever kind of sin thou findest stirring in thy self, know, that this simply signifies no evil state: it is indeed the issue of thy corrupt nature, but if it reign not, thou art in a good case for all that: *His servants ye are to whom ye yeild your selves to obey, Rom. 6. 16.*

2. Are they loathsome to God?

1. This shews men are either very ignorant or desperately secure, that are not at all affected with this; that can be as light-hearted and merry, as if they were Gods minions and favourites. Either of these is enough to prove they are of the persons we have been convicting all this while. What if thou dyest in this condition and be summoned presently to appear at Gods Tribunal? thou art as one *asleep upon the top of a mast, Prov. 23. 34.*

2. Then

2. Then 'tis not all the pageantry and outward appearances, nor all the external applications in the world will make them acceptable: it is not strowing flowers and herbs will keep them from stinking. If loathsome because corrupt, the way to become acceptable, is first to become sound and sincere. It is not painting that makes natural beauty, or commends a person to an impartial eye: 'tis true, a person is not acceptable but in Christ; but a sound heart applies it self to Christ. The works are accepted in the person, not the person for the works. Men are generally mistaken that think by their doings to work their persons into acceptance first.

3. If unprofitable and good for nothing,

1. Then nothing can keep a natural man in credit with himself, but ignorance and unbelief. How loathsome would this render him if he did believe he was good for nothing, for God, for himself? He is neither according to the Law of Creation, nor the rule of Redemption.

2. Then they may know their doom, *Mat. 25. 30, Cast ye the unprofitable servant into utter darkness.* *Mat. 3. 10, Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire.* They that are good for nothing, can never expect to hear that comfortable word, *Euge bone serve, Well done good and faithful servant,* *Mat. 25. 21.* If any such think, he may save himself from *Luk. 17. 10, So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all these things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants;* he is much mistaken: for unprofitableness there, signifies

signifies their non-meriting from the best, though they are not without good-works.

*Quest.* If a man have been corrupt, and unprofitable all this while, how may he do to be otherwise?

*Ans.* He will never be profitable, until he get into a new stock, *Joh. 15. 4, As the branch cannot bear fruit of it self, except it abide in the vine: no more can ye, except ye abide in me. Ver. 6, If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and withered.*

2. Until he get a new nature. *Mat. 7. 17, A corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit, and a good tree bringeth forth good fruit: The branch bringeth forth fruit, because it receives the sap and nature of the vine. He that is joyned to the Lord, is one spirit, 1 Cor. 6. 17.*

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C H A P. XII.

Ver. 3. **T**Here is none that doth good, no not one. According to the original, there is not doing good, even not one. When we spoke to this Proposition, ( for the words are a proposition in themselves ) from the first *verse*, I distinguished of good, 1<sup>st</sup>, Good is either Moral, or Spiritual: 2<sup>dly</sup>, Materially or formally good, I only desire you to look back, if you please, and pass on more particularly, to enquire into this phrase of *doing good*, towards the better explication of the thing. There is implied,

1. An aiming at the good we do; for 'tis impossible a man should do good, *i. e.* do good well, that never minds nor means what he doth. Thus David said, *Psal. 119. 121, He had done judgment and justice.* They are great words, *ver. 117,* will explain it, *I will have respect unto thy statutes continually.* 2 Chron. 24. 16, *They buried Jehoiada amongst the Kings, because he had done good in Israel, both towards God, and towards his house.* Which I should explain thus: towards the house of God, for Gods sake. On the contrary, Chap. 25. 2, *Amaziah did that which is right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart,* *i. e.* with aim to Gods glory.

2. There is implied, *propensio ad actum*, a readiness in doing good; which is not so much a facility



cility or dexterity ( which depends upon greater strength and skill ) as a proneness thereunto. Man can never be said to do that morally, which he hath no heart to. In this sense *David* says again, *Psal.* 119. 166, *I have done thy commandments.* This is a great word ( as I said before ), but I count the next *verse* explains it, *v.* 167, *My soul keepeth thy Testimonies, and I love them exceedingly.* He had kept them out of love, and therefore had done them.

3. There is implied *data opera*, with set purpose and endeavour, *1 Joh.* 2. ult. *If ye know that he is righteous: ye know that every one that doth righteousness is born of him.*

4. There is implied, *actus continuus*, a continued act, *Psal.* 119. 44, *So shall I keep thy Law continually, for ever and ever:* which though it admits of intermission or interruption; yet it hath no absolute cessation. As they are said to pray always, that use this trade upon all occasions, *Eph.* 6. 18, *Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him,* *2 Cor.* 5. 9, *i. e.* that we may do those things that please him.

5. There is implied *complacentia in agendo*, pleasure and delight in so doing, that is in some measure and degree, *Rom.* 7. 22, *I delight in the Law of God, in the inward man.* Paul was a doer, if any man; and yet he could not do what he would, *ver.* 19. But he delighted in the Law of God: and therefore concludes, *ver. ult.* himself to be Gods faithful servant: *So then with my mind, I my self serve the Law of God,* *i. e.* with the whole renewed part, opposed unto flesh, *i. e.* the

the whole corrupt part: Not as some would have it run, in favour of their wretchedness, that they may expose their bodies to Idolatry or uncleanness, and yet keep their minds pure, *Psal. 119. 14, I have rejoyced in the way of thy Testimonies, as much as in all riches.* Though every Christian be not of *David's* pitch, yet he hath something of *David's* spirit.

2. The demonstration of the proposition, That no natural man doth thus do good,

1. Because they have no good root; for the first *Adam* can be no good root to them; for nothing but sin and death came by him. The second *Adam*, *Jesus Christ*, which is the only good root, *John 15. 4*, is no root unto them; for they have nothing which joyns or engrafs them to him, therefore they can do no good.

2. Because they have no root in them; no good in them by nature. Why should I insist upon that which I have been about all this while? I only give you in that place, *Rom. 3. 18*, which *Paul* makes the long and the short of his discourse from the beginning of the Chapter, *There is no fear of God before their eyes.*

2. They have none by transfusion or spiritual conveyance. To descend a little to particulars.

1. They have no Faith, therefore no good. I take Faith here as a root of Sanctification: though the first and primary Office of it be to carry the soul to Christ; yet the secondary is to act in a way of good works and well-doing, *Heb. 11. 33; By faith they wrought righteousness.* Ver. 8, *By faith Abraham left his country.* Verse 27, *By faith Moses left the court.* And though I grant every other grace hath its part in well-doing,  
yet

yet deny, that there is any of them where Faith is not. But natural men have not Faith. Their description is, they are unbelievers both in relation to Christ and the Word too, *1 Pet. 2. 8.*

2. They have no root of love. All well-doing must proceed from love: love is made the cause of service or obedience, *Lu<sup>k</sup>. 16. 13,* and therefore made the great Commandment, *Mat. 22: 37, 38,* to let us know no man can keep any Commandment, that keeps it not out of love: but no natural man hath this. For every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God, *1 John 4. 7.*

3. They have no obediential spirit: for obedience is properly when we accomodate our will to the will of another, *Rom. 6. 16, His servants ye are, whom ye obey.* There are therefore many good servants in common phrase, which indeed are very bad servants: To speak properly, *i. e.* though they can do well if they list, yet they will do nothing but what they please. A good work must be done, *ex intuitu voluntatis divinae,* with respect to the divine Will, according to that, *1 Pet. 2. 19, If a man for conscience toward God suffer evil,* or do well, this is obedience; and therefore Gods children are called *ἑκτα ὁπακούσας*, children of obedience, *1 Pet. 1. 14,* because they have hearts flexible to Gods persuasions. But no natural man hath any such spirit, for they are all at once called, *ὁδοὶ ἡμετέρας ἀπειθείας*, children of disobedience, *Eph. 2. 2.* Men that cannot be persuaded, according to the sense of the word, *The spirit that now rules in the children of disobedience: amongst whom we all had our conversation in times past.*

3. Because they have their hearts full of many bitter roots, which are all in general opposite to well-doing; and every one in particular to some good work or other; and those altogether unmortified too. Some are of a general evil influence, as atheism. infidelity, vanity of mind, darkness of understanding, hardness and senselessness of heart, &c. where these are in prevalency, there can be no good. You may as well expect corn where all is over-grown with briars and thorns. So in particular, they have pride, contrary to humility; passion, to meekness; sensuality, to purity; earthly-mindedness, to heavenly-mindedness; these natural men are full of, and that in dominion, *Rom. 1. 29.*

4. Because they have all of them a close adherence to some lust or other which spoils all: as *Solomon* says, *One sinner destroys much good, Eccl. 9. 18.* So some one sin destroys not only much good, but all good; and speaks a man void of all godliness, because it takes up all the heart. Thus pride eats up the heart of one, takes up all his thoughts; covetousness of another, makes him good for nothing, nor any body but himself, much less for God. So uncleanness spoils some Body and Soul, that they have no heart, no room for God, nor any thing that is good, *Hos. 4. 11,* *When ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness,* *Rom. 6. 20.* There is not a dram of grace, where men are set upon any of these, or such like.

5. To have done. They have not so much as the bud of a good thought, nor the blossom of a good desire: How then can they bring forth any

fruit of well-doing? All well-doing must come from some good beginnings: Doing well must proceed from thinking well. But they have not so much as this, *Gen. 6. 5, Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.* Not, but that sometimes they may have thoughts of good, but no good thoughts; because they are to no good end, or purpose: And what is not to good purpose, is bad, not only in Divinity, but in Morals. And for desires, see *Prov. 17. 16, Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom seeing he hath no heart to it? Deut. 5. 29, O that there were such a heart in them!*

Object. 1. *But have they not a desire of happiness?*

*Ans.* Yea, but this is natural. The poorest, and most wicked creature in the world would be happy, and many cheat and undo themselves by mistaking this very thing, for true desire: whereas what happiness consists in, they neither know, or the way to it, or desire it.

Object. 2. *But cannot they pray?*

*Ans.* I have answered this in the former discourse on this subject. This is materially good, but nothing to the purpose in hand.

Object. 3. *Why may we not say (as some have said), That man at first was made in an indifferency to good and evil?*

*Ans.* This is no Scripture-divinity, that man was made in such an indifferency, that he was equally inclinable to good and evil. For, 1. Then what



what means the Image of God, in which man was created? *Gen. 1. 27, God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him.* And the Apostle explains this to be *in knowledge, in righteousness, and true holiness, Col. 3. 10. Eph. 4. 24.* And was he for all this equally inclinable to good and evil? He was capable indeed of evil, because of the mutability of his nature. 2. This opinion makes the Image of God to be natural-understanding, and free-will; and then the Devils retain the Image of God. 3. If it consist in free-will in their sense, what is it, but to make God indifferent both to good and evil! Whereas he is necessarily determined to good.

Object. 4. *Though man have lost something by the fall, yet not all: he is as the man going from Jerusalem to Jericho, Luk. 10. 30, but semi mortuus, half dead; not so disabled, but some good remains in him: therefore some good he may do.*

Ans. 1. Why is sin then called *a man, an old man?* Rom. 6. 6. Eph. 4. 22. *A body of sin, ibid. a body of death?* Rom. 7. 24. What do these speak, but the integrity of it? It is weakned indeed, and brought under in Gods people, but not in natural men.

2. What is the meaning of that phraseology then, *Rom. 6. 6, That henceforth we should not serve sin?* Doth it not plainly imply, that before they did nothing but serve sin? and he that serves sin, what is he but a servant of sin, according to Christs-logick, *Luk. 16. 13, No man can serve two masters?* and *Rom. 6. 20. When ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness,*

*ness*, q. d. ye did nothing at all that was good. And so the Apostle backs his Exhortation to holiness: When ye were the servants of sin, ye did no good at all: Therefore now, ye have all the reason in the world to betake your selves to it, with all diligence.

Quest. 3. *But why not one? No, not One.*

*Ans.* Because if one, he must have an exemption from the common state of nature, and the universal curse of God upon *Adams* Children. And what can any man shew for that? Or,

2. He must have an exemption by the grace of God. And then he must be more than a meer Son of *Adam*, a Child of God: which can belong to no natural man, as such.

Then, 1. What riches of goodness, long-suffering, and patience, doth God shew towards man! If a man had a servant that could do him no good, but lie upon his hands, as an unprofitable burden, would he endure him from years end to years end? And yet all is despised, little thought on, little valued.

2. Why do men cheat themselves with an imaginary righteousness, at the present, or presumption for the future? Though men be never so bad, debauch and debase themselves every day, yet they will establish their own righteousness: Some good they have, and some they do; and this good they will set against their bad, and make account they may shift well enough for heaven; At least they have strong presumptions, they can do good for the future, and will to. They will repent, and turn, and lead a new life, and

and make God amends before they die. They presume at least, they can do something which shall commend them to his grace, and oblige him to do for them. And on these presumptions, they are as well as can be. The current of time will sweep away all these refuges of lyes, and a few dayes more will undeceive you.

3. Why do men deceive themselves, that they shall be saved by Jesus Christ? The plain English of this conceit is, That do well, do ill, do good, or do none, Christ will save them, especially if they have but so much time, as to call upon God for mercy: and 't may be, they will quote you the Text, *Rom. 10. 13, For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved.* It is not long since I told you, that mistaken, or mis-applied scriptures, are one of those sandy Foundations men rest upon. The true sense of the Text before us, is, *That he is rich unto all that call upon him*, be he Jew, or be he Gentile, that's no matter, as appears, *vers. 12.* But then, *How shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed?* *Vers. 14.* The sum is, he must be one that calls upon the Lord in truth, and hath accepted of the Lord Jesus: which is another thing, than these men count of; not a presumptuous confidence, which faith they have alwayes ready at hand. Again, do not deceive your selves, to think that a believer is an evil-doer, *i. e.* an absolute evil-doer. For though he may do what is evil, and offend doth; yet, it is not with absolute intention, inclination, design and purpose; it is not a continued act, or trade of life, and that where-

in he takes complacency, and blesses himself: much less is it a course, and common way of grosser evils; wherein men will willingly mistake, (say what we can) and believe, that a man may be a Christian, and a common Swearer, or Drunkard, &c. and yet bless himself in his wickedness too.

*Quest.* But how should a natural man be convinced of this, that these are meer cheats, and that he can do no good?

*Answ.* 1. Let him mind the carriage of his heart, in his duties, wherein he counts his Religion lies; and see, whether in them he really stand affected towards God, and upon what account.

2. His graces, or his gracious actings (as he counts them) his faith, and repentance, &c. (For it's possible a natural man may go no day, without some shadow of repentance, &c. Let him mind, I say, what Fountain they come from, and whither they tend. Observe whether they be not some natural issues, and meer self, from first to last; his repentance, some kind of natural revenge for wronging himself.

3. Whether Christ be any more to him, than he is to every body; good in the general notion of a Saviour, without any special relation to him, or desire of it.

4. If so, then you see how this Doctrine makes way for Christ; and how subservient the Law is unto the Gospel: Why *the law was added*, as the Apostle says, *Gal. 3. 19*, and why it is preached. It unbottoms a man quite, that he may build upon the Foundation. If a man can do no good, it drives to Christ, as an universal Saviour, to give us salvation, and work that in us which accompanies salvation.

5. What

5. What remains then, for a poor, humbled, convinced sinner, but to take to the remedy of the Gospel, which exhibits one that wrought righteousness for us, and that works righteousness in us? Let us not go on presuming (as we use to do) of our own power and strength, and what we could do, nor slip into that other by-way of despair; but avoiding these two rocks, directly steer our thoughts and course towards the Lord Jesus. It remains only to give answer to a Query or two, and I will shut up all.

Quest. 1. *Why is this Doctrine so ingeminated, and repeated? We have it, vers. 1. vers. 3. Psal. 53. and yet again Rom. 3. from 9. to 20.*

Ans. 1. Because man is a very proud creature, and this Doctrine wholly humbling: And therefore as it hardly enters, so it is inculcated again, and again.

2. Because we are hardly brought to believe it, when all is done; all Scripture seems to be too little sometime.

3. The Holy Ghost foresaw, that this Doctrine would be mightily opposed with great subtilty, and many declamations. The Devil is against it; the Pope against it; men of our own Profession against it; and (which is worst of all) our selves against it, as I said before.

4. Because it is highly advantageous well to learn it. For, 1. It brings a natural man *in proxima potentiam*, into an immediate disposition for the revelation of grace. 2. Because the evidence of this is of great advantage in many puzzling temptations about effectual calling. 3. Because it



doth more and more prepare the way of the Lord,  
and dispose the soul for his better reception.

Quest. 2. *But why, such a vehement exclusive at the last? No, not one.*

Ans. 1. Because man is very prone to grant it, as to others, yet deny it, or not own it, as to himself: as may be gathered from *Rom. 2. 1. Wherefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest, &c.* Every man in particular is apt to judg so well of himself, that if there be but one in the world exempt, it is he.

2. Because unbelief is highly critical. It would be turning it off as an indefinite proposition, not owning it as an universal negative. It is sometimes so critical, there is no silencing it, but by neglect and contempt.

Though I have now done speaking to this subject; yet should it be the subject of our every dayes Observation and Meditation.

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**F I N I S.**

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MAN'S  
SALVATION

BY

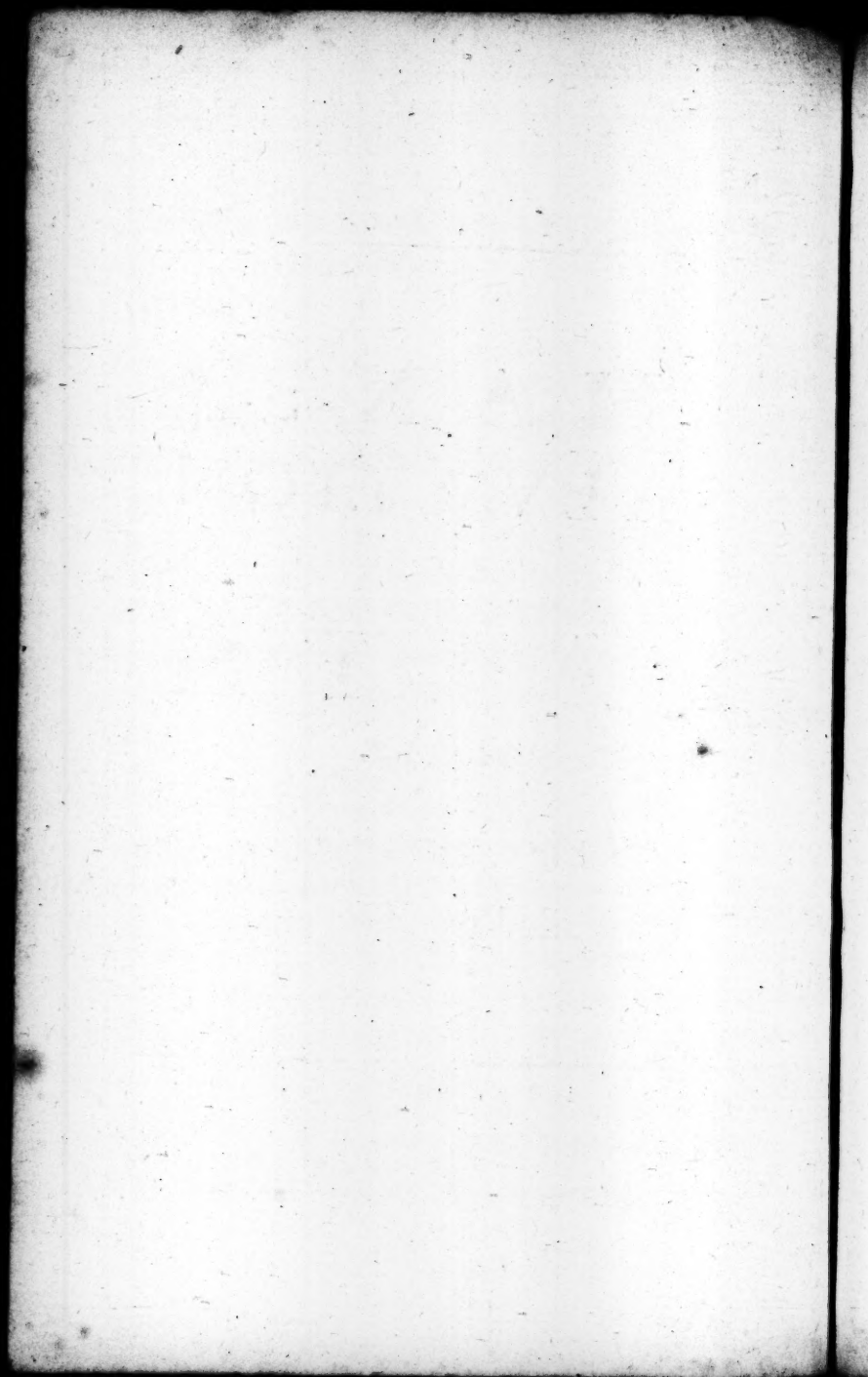
FAITH

ON THE

*Lord Jesus Christ;*

Grounded on *Acts 16. 31.*

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READER,

**T**Hough I am not forward  
to trouble thee with  
words; yet it is not fit  
I should be wanting to  
thee in what is necessary. If the  
former Discourse hath had its intend-  
ed Work upon thee, thou would'st then  
desire to hear more. I now suppose  
thee to know the absolute necessity of  
Faith, and its great concernment. I  
suppose thee, with Paul, trembling  
and astonish'd, Act. 9. 6. Then  
(as Ananias told him) it is necessary  
thou should'st know his Will, and  
see that just one, and should'st hear  
the voice of his mouth, Act. 22. 14.  
Abyssus abyssum invocat, Deep calls  
upon deep, Psal. 42. 7. There is  
no lower estate, than Sin exposes to:  
and we need no greater Saviour than  
our Jesus, or greater Salvation than  
he

he exhibits. I should therefore hope, this Faith we are now speaking of, as I am sure 'tis necessary, should also be precious; my work is done. Yours is,

1. To try, whether this Faith I have describ'd, be not the true Faith. I am not only willing, but very desirous thou wouldst bring it to the Test; and take heed I do not deceive thee. Do not stand to the arbitration of Men. You shall have one tell you this, and another that: But search the Scriptures; judg for thy self: I have endeavour'd to assist thee with light and evidence. Try whether this be not the Faith by which Abraham was saved, Rom. 4. 3, &c. by which David was justified, Psal. 32. 1, 2. with Rom. 4. 6. That the Prophet Isaiah every where proclaims (see chap. 53. chap. 42. 24.) that Peter profess'd, Matt. 16. 16, Paul Preach'd, and himself liv'd by, 1 Cor.



2. 2. Gal. 2. 20. Try whether this be not the same Faith you find working in the Primitive Worthies, both of the Old-Testament, and the New. Why should I insist? I have done my business: And the business of this, is only to put thee upon doing thine. Try it thoroughly.

2. Try for it, whether thou hast such a Faith, or no. Who would be without Life? Rom. 1. 17. Who would be without that, which is his stay and staff? 2 Cor. 5. 7: without that, that should bring him into the presence of God with joy, and confidence? Ephes. 3. 12. Rom. 15. 13: and interest him in all the Treasures and Riches of Gods Grace? Ephes. 3. 17, 19. If thou art without it, 'tis necessary thou know, that thou art without it: If thou hast it, to know thou hast it, may be much in thy way.

3. To live by this tried Faith.  
What

*What do you mean Sir? Upon all occasions to have recourse to Jesus Christ; whatever thou hast to do, or suffer. Jam. 15. 5, He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. God hath given him to be head over all things to the Church, Ephes. 1. 22. We are undone for want of living upon Jesus Christ; the Devil baffles us, and every thing is too hard for us. See not only Paul, Gal. 2. 20, but the cloud of Witnesses, that by Faith wrought Righteousness (i. e. did what they should do) obtain promises, out of weakness became strong, Heb. 11. 33, 34.*

*And now (Reader) thou hast thy will of me, I wish I may obtain my desire of thee: And that is, that nothing in this Book be made use of to vain jangling, and needless disputes;*

*sputes ; but all, as thy help to more  
serious Christianity, Christian stabili-  
ty, Self-abasement, and exaltation of  
Christ.*

December 8.

1675.

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ACT.

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## A C T. XVI. XXXI.

*And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*

**T**HIS Chapter gives us a brief Narrative of *Paul's* Travel into *Macedonia* (whither he was directed by the Spirit, *vers.* 10.) with the issue and consequent of it, the conversion of *Lydia*, and the Jaylor. To make short: *Paul* and *Silas* being beaten, and cast into Prison, (the occasion of which you may see, from *vers.* 16, to 22.) The Jaylor was very strict with them, *vers.* 24. *At midnight, they prayed, and sang praise unto God, vers.* 25. The immediate consequent of this, was a great earthquake: So that *the foundations of the Prison were shaken, vers.* 26. This Providence occasions another greater earthquake in the heart of the Jaylor: *He came trembling, and fell down before Paul, and Silas, vers.* 29. And this occasions a serious question, *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* A serious question, not a curious, like that of *Peter*; and *what shall this man do?* *Joh.* 21, 21. But *what must I do to be saved?* Though in peace, and prosperity, in their quiet, and calms, men can be careless, and make no matter of it;

Q

yet



yet under Gods awakenings they see there must be something done, some course taken for salvation.

The Text is an answer to this question: *And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, &c.*

Where is, 1. An answer given, *and they said,*  
2. The matter of it, *Believe on the Lord Jesus, &c.*

In that there is an answer given: Meditate,

1. What a miracle of mercy it is, that there can be an answer given to such a question? Had man been in no better a condition than the fallen Angels, we must have been for ever silent to such a demand. But there is hope in *Israel*.

2. What a wonderful blessing it is to have Ministers ready to make answers to such questions. Ministers are seldom regarded, but at a streight, in such plunges and perplexities: But then, if there be an interpreter to be found, he is welcom. Observe,

3. The excellent Spirit of *Paul* and *Silas*; they are not malicious, churlish, proud, rendring evil for evil. Though they have him now in Bonds, as he had them before; yet they readily give an answer. *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, &c.*

2. In the matter: Observe, 1. The act, *Believe*.  
2. The object, *On the Lord Jesus*. 3. The comfortable effect, *And thou shalt be saved*.

The object being first in nature, I begin with that: Whence,

Observ. 1. *Jesus Christ is the proper object of saving faith*. Believe on the Lord Jesus.

By object, I mean that which Faith is conversant

tant about, or that which Faith hath immediately to do with, to attain Salvation. He is the proper object of Faith, as the object of the eye, is *omne visibile*, every thing that may be seen; and the object of knowledg, is *omne cognoscibile*, every thing that may be known.

In handling this proposition, I shall speak to it;  
1. Negatively. 2. Positively. 1. Negatively,  
Where we shall enquire into two Opinions which contend for it.

1. The first is that of the Papists, who say, the Scripture is the object of saving Faith, as saving.

But a Man may believe all the Truths in the Bible, and yet miss of Salvation: It is not believing the *Bible* to be true, or the Word of God; or any, or all the Truths in it, in a sense, which is saving Faith. To understand this, I distinguish;

1. Faith, or assent, is either general and common;
2. Or special and spiritual.

General assent is, when a Man believes the propositions in the *Bible*, as true and good in the general. Special assent is, believing them to be true, or good, in relation to himself. *Vid. pemples vind. gr. p. 97.* According to the first, *The Devils believe and tremble, Jam. 2. 19. i. e.* Know, and assent, that they are true and good in the general; but not for them. And that which the Devils do, wicked men may do. As to the second, I grant; that he which believes or assents to the truth of Scripture, and goodness of that which he believes to be so true, shall be saved: and that *eo instanti*, is in a saving state: But not barely, because he so believes; but because, this his belief works so far, as it

Prevails with him to come unto the more proper and special object of Faith, Jesus Christ: of which, more anon. And in this sense, I understand that, *1 Joh. 5. 1, Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.* What! every one born of God, that believeth that Jesus is the Christ, *i. e.* the person ordained, and appointed of God to be our Saviour? Do not many believe this, which yet are no body in truth? *Joh. 2. 23, Many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did: But Jesus did not commit himself unto them: for he knew all men, vers. 24.* He durst not trust them, for all their Faith. But notwithstanding, whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ, with such a special, particular Faith, as before described; applies himself to him: and so it is a sign he is born of God.

To prove therefore, that the Scripture, or the truth in it, is not the special, or proper object of saving faith.

*Arg. 1.* The meer belief of these, makes not a Man righteous before God: Therefore, they are not the proper object. For the proper object of saving faith, is that which Faith finds righteousness in; and consequently Salvation. He that is saved, must be a righteous person, and that compleatly so: For God justifies none but those he sees just. *For the judgment of God is according to truth, Rom. 2. 4.* And though it be said, *He justifies the ungodly, Rom. 4. 5,* yet it is meant, of one that is in himself legally ungodly; (as even the best are) but not evangelically, because of the imputation of the perfect righteousness of Christ, and the beginnings of inherent.

herent. But the meer belief of the Scriptures, makes no Man righteous before God; because the Scriptures, as such, have not that to give a Man: They are only the instrument, declaring such a righteousness, but not exhibiting.

*Arg. 2.* Neither the Law, nor the Gospel, makes man righteous: Therefore the Scriptures are not the proper object of saving Faith.

1. Not the Law. For that only shews a Man, that he is miserable, and under the Curse. *For by the law comes the knowledg of sin, Rom. 3. 20. i. e.* Men comparing themselves with the Rule of the Law, see how peccant and irregular they are. And the Curse follows sin: *For cursed is every one that continues not in all things that are written in the book of the law; to do them, Gal. 3. 10. Rom. 4. 15, The law worketh wrath.* Both lays men under sense of wrath; and of it self makes them but more enraged.

2. Not the Gospel. For this makes not righteous, but as it brings to Christ: *In whom all the promises are, yea, and amen, 2 Cor. 1. 20. i. e.* Take Christ, and then so, and so, be it to you.

Yet I grant,

*Concession* 1. That the belief of the Scripture, and the truth in it, is a necessary Antecedent to saving Faith. He that believes not the Law, is never terrified for sin, so as to look after Salvation; and he that believes not the report which God hath given of his Son, as true, and good for him; will never be prevailed with, to come to him, or look after him.

*Concesf.* 2. That the first, and next object of

saving Faith, are the Scriptures; but the primary and principal object, is Jesus Christ. That a man may be encouraged to come to Christ, he must first attend to the revelation of the Gospel; how God sets him forth for a propitiation. And therefore it is, that sometimes in Scripture, Christ is called the foundation, *1 Cor. 3. 11, Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, Jesus Christ*: And sometimes the Scriptures themselves, *Eph. 2. 20, And are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets*. One is the Doctrinal foundation, the other the Personal.

*Concesf. 3.* It may be the same habit of Faith, whereby a true believer receives Christ, and believes the Scriptures, *1 Joh. 4. 15*, and *5. 1*: But in a natural man, they are one without the other.

I have been all this while, contending with an opinion of the Papists; which yet I have done for your sakes: For it is as common in our nature, as theirs; and too too common in our practical conceits. How many think themselves true believers, because they believe the Story of the *Bible*; that there was such a person as Jesus Christ, that came into the World, and died for sinners? And how few are there think otherwise?

2. I come now, to consider another opinion, *viz.* of our reformed Divines; who in their heat of opposition against the Popish doubting, have asserted Faith to be assurance; and consequently, that the object of Faith, is some such proposition as this, *That my sins are forgiven me*; or, *That I am in the favour of God*: or, *That I shall certainly be saved*. And this opinion is common also, both



both amongst good and bad. Some believe their sins are pardoned; and this keeps them whole, and well, and strangers to Christ: others cannot think they believe, because they cannot believe their sins are pardoned. You see then, what Reason we have to take notice of this.

But I say, that neither this, *My sins are forgiven me*, nor any such like proposition, are the objects of true Faith: And consequently, a Man may believe them, (I take Faith in a more large sense) and yet be no true believer; or not believe them, and yet be a true believer.

*Arg. 1.* Because, to believe my sins are forgiven me, makes them never the more to be so: Because such a Proposition, makes no man more righteous than he was before. It is true, assurance makes a Christian very holy, and humble: But this is not the righteousness by which he is accepted before God.

*Arg. 2.* Because, to believe my sins are forgiven me, before I have received Christ; is to believe that which is not true. Even the elect of God, while they are actual unbelievers, and not wrought to Faith in Christ, abide under the wrath of God; though God hath from all eternity, determined them to be pardoned. *He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides upon him, Joh. 3. ult.*

*Arg. 3.* It is not so much, as the inseparable adjunct; much less the proper object. Saving Faith may be without the knowledg, that my sins are pardoned. Shall we condemn the generation of the just, as *Lo Gnammi*, and *Lo Ruchmah*; because they are in the dark, as to the discovery

discovery of their own Faith, or the priviledg consequent thereupon: or deny that Scripture, *Isa.* 50. 10, *Who is amongst you, that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant; that walketh in darkness, and seeth no light?* If a Child of God should go doubting of his Salvation out of the World, I see it no necessary conclusion, that therefore he had no Faith. If it be not a necessary concomitant, much less its proper object.

*Arg.* 4. To believe my sins are pardoned, is the belief only of a proposition; and the belief of all the propositions in the World, simply as such, will save no Man. Yet I grant,

1. Pardon of sin is one of the great consequents, or effects of believing in Christ. *Acts* 10. 43, *To him give all the Prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins.*

2. That upon believing, there may be assurance of this, *Eph.* 1. 13, *In whom after ye believed ye were sealed, &c.*

3. There may be assurance also, upon the very first act of believing; if God see good. I say it is not impossible, *Act.* 16. 15. So I dismiss the Negative.

2. Positively, Jesus Christ is the proper object of saving Faith. I mean, Faith is so conversant about Jesus Christ, that *he that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life,* 1 *Joh.* 5. 12. *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life,* *Joh.* 3. ult.

*Arg.* 1. Christ every where, so preaches himself, the proper object. *Matt.* 11. 28, *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and*

I will give you rest. Joh. 7. 37, *If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.* Joh. 6. 35, *I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me, shall never hunger; and he that believeth in me, shall never thirst.* Vers. 57, *He that eateth me, even he shall live by me.* It is manifest in that Chapter, from vers. 29, to the end.

Arg. 2. God the Father hath so propounded him, Joh. 6. 40, *And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life.* Rom. 3. 25, *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood.* Joh. 3. 16, *He gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

Arg. 3. Jesus Christ is that person alone, which directly answers to the saving Types. I shall instance only in two.

1. Of the Brazen Serpent, Joh. 3. 14, *And as Moses lifted up the Serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.* The Brazen-Serpent did not cure, or save, by believing that there was such a Serpent, or that I was cured whether I looked or no; but by looking the person was cured. You see how Christ applies it, *Even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.* vers. 15.

2. Of the Manna. Joh. 6. 35, *I am the bread of life.* Vers. 48, *I am that bread of life.* Ver. 51, *I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread which I will give, is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.* Ver. 58,

This

*This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat Manna, &c.*

*Arg. 4.* That wherein the awakened, enlightened conscience can find rest, and is truly satisfied, or may be; That is the proper object of Faith. But in Christ the Soul finds rest. *Mat. 11. 28, Act. 10. 36, He is preaching peace by Jesus Christ. Isa. 11. 10, And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, &c. to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious. Heb. 9. 14, How much more shall the blood of Christ, purge your conscience from dead works? Chap. 10. 22, Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.*

*Arg. 5.* The Blood of Christ gives confidence at the throne of Grace: Therefore it is the proper object. For however men may have confidence which believe not, but presume; it is because they are not awakened, and know not what sin means; or from natural temper, spirited by the Devil. The meaning of the Proposition, is a well-measured confidence, that will hold by Scripture-evidence: This only is through Jesus Christ. *Eph. 3. 12, In whom we have boldness, and access with confidence by the faith of him. Heb. 10. 19, Having therefore boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus. Though all have not this confidence, that is nothing to the purpose; some have. 2 Cor. 5. 6, 8, We are always confident, &c. we are confident, I say: some have, and all Gods people might have, if they knew their priviledg.*

*Arg. 6.* It is Christ wherein, and whereby, the promise is given. *Gal. 3. 22, That the promise*

mise by the faith of Jesus, might be given to them which believe. What promise is this? *Vers. 16* tells us; *To Abraham and his seed was the promise made.* And what was that, but, *I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed?* *Gen. 17. 7.* Now says the Text, *He hath concluded all under sin, ~~id est~~* all, not only persons, but works; and not only one, but all: So that there is no other way of coming to the promise, but by faith of Jesus Christ. *That the promise by the faith of Jesus Christ, might be given to them which believe:* So, that it is not only, *causa sine qua non*; but *causa formalis*: For what is properly saving, if that be not, unto which salvation is given?

*Arg. 7.* Believing in Christ, hath the seal of the spirit. Whether it be in a way of sanctification, or otherwise, is not to the present purpose. Eph. 1. 13, *In whom after ye believed, ye were sealed.* 1 Joh. 5. 10, *He that believeth, hath the witness in himself:* The mediate witness, or the witness of Sanctification; whether the discovery of this or no. *Ergo.*

*Confekt.* 1. If Christ, and not the Scripture, be the proper object of saving Faith : Then knowledg, though of the Scriptures, though of the Gospel it self, will not serve turn for Salvation ; much less, that meer, literal, notional, rational, educational knowledg of them. 2 Tim. 3. 15, *The scriptures are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.* This speaks not at all to the disparagement of the Scriptures, or the true knowledg of them : For he dishonours not a Noble Man, who prefers him not to the Prince.

2. Then



2. Then our own works, duties, performances, acts of charity, and in a word, all we can do, will not serve turn. Though Faith have a mighty influence into all these; and without them faith is nothing, *i. e.* is no true faith; yet there can be no trust put in them: because they are not Christ; or the proper ground of trust. *Joh. 10. 9, I am the door of the sheep, says Christ, by me if any man enter he shall be saved. Gal. 5. 5, We through the spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness through faith.* Therefore Faith is called the work, *Joh. 6. 29, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.*

3. Then our Faith cannot be the proper object of our faith, or confidence; we cannot trust in our trusting, nor believe in our faith, nor be confident in our confidence: for it is not Faith which saves properly, but Christ. It is true, we are often said to be justified by Faith: But the meaning is, by Faith, *cum suo correlato*, as Divines express it, *i. e.* by Christ believed on, and so set in opposition unto works. We are justified by Faith, *i. e.* by Christ believed on; and not by works, which was the question then in debate. This may undeceive many. Many are confident their sins are pardoned; and this is their Faith. This many times proves a damnable mistake: For assuring themselves without ground, their sins are pardoned, they never look farther; and so come short of Christ and Salvation by him: These are usually the profane sort. Some others may think indeed, that this is the object of Faith, and be perswaded their sins are pardoned, and be in a safe state; because they may have also received Jesus Christ, which is properly that

that which saves. They believe in the Lord with all their heart; though they may be so far mistaken, in the notion of Faith. This may serve to direct them also, which because they have not this assurance, that they are in the favour of God, &c. think they have no Faith; whereas there hearts stand continually fixed towards Jesus Christ.

4. Then how admirable is the righteousness of the Gospel, *i. e.* the righteousness which the Gospel declares! because it gives to God what he demands, full and compleat satisfaction: It brings Christ, the Lamb of God, for its sacrifice. *Joh.*

1. 29, *For Christ our passover is sacrificed for us,* 1 *Cor.* 5. 7. A believer in Christ, may make a true and sound Apology, before the throne of God, *Uxor splendet radiis mariti*, the Wife is honourable in the rayes of her Husband. *Col.*

2. 10, *For in him we are compleat,* *πεπληρομένοι.* It would be a meer calumny, to say it speaks of inward righteousness.

5. It shews what true ground Believers have of rejoycing and confidence; according to the Apostles exhortation, *Phil.* 4. 4, *Rejoyce in the Lord always, and again, I say, rejoyce.* Such an object of our Faith, is ground of our joy. *In the Lord, shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.*

6. This directs all that are seriously looking after God, what to do in the first place. Are you stung with the sense of your sins, and the conviction of a Natural estate? The first thing you are to aim at, is getting into Jesus Christ. So long as ever you stand upon your own bottom, you are in an unsafe estate. Persons convinced, are like People fallen into the River, that lay hold

hold on any thing they hope may help them : or like some sick men, that are for trying all conclusions, before they will go to the Physician. The first thing is to learn Christ, *Eph. 4. 20, But ye have not so learned Christ.* Paul makes account, if they were Christians, they had learned Christ. You are troubled with fear of damnation, the wrath of God, the terrours of Hell ; you will never be rightly rid of these, but by Jesus Christ. *We are delivered from the curse of the law, Christ being made a curse for us, Gal. 3. 13.* Receive him, and then you may plead him at Gods Barr, and quit your selves ; which Divines call righteousness by Apology. Lord, I was so, and so, and bad enough I am still ; (though my heart be mightily changed ; to what it was) but Jesus Christ suffered the law for me ; fulfilled the Law for me : *i. e.* Jesus Christ was righteousness for me. God hath set him forth for a propitiation ; if you will receive him as he is offered, you may not only get the burden off your back, but be one day as happy as an Angel in Heaven.

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## CHAP. II.

**H**AVING spoken to the Doctrine in general, I now resume it to a more particular enquiry: That we may be steadily directed to this object.

Quest. 1. *Under what notion, or consideration, is Christ the object of saving faith?*

Ans. Neg. 1. Not as second person in Trinity barely: For as such meerly, he bears no more relation unto us, than unto fallen Angels.

2. Not as God meerly and precisely; for so, he could not be under the Law properly. 2. So he could not suffer the curse for mankind: for God as God, is impassible, as he is immutable.

3. Not as man only; for so he could not bear up under his sufferings, they being equivalently infinite.

2ly. *Positively*, But he is the object of Faith.

1. As God-man, Θεανθρωπος, That Person that was Man, was also God. He which was born of the Virgin Mary, was also called the Son of God. Luk. 1. 35. Joh. 3. 13, *No man hath ascended up to heaven, but the son of man which is in heaven.* ὁ ὢν ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, *qui est existens in cælis.* who is existing in Heaven. How could this be? By virtue of the union with the Divine Nature,  
he

he is said to be in Heaven, which otherwise was on Earth, and never in Heaven as yet. See *Isa. 9. 6. Heb. 7. 26.* This God-man truly, and properly, is the object of saving Faith.

But this is not all; for though here is great preparation to such a saving work, as we needed; yet here is nothing can give Faith satisfaction. Therefore,

2. As Mediatour, transacting the affairs of lost man: For if Christ had clothed himself with flesh, as Angels have sometimes done, to do men some other courtesie, or good offices, or to make himself meerly an example to mankind, by his converse in the World; or over and above to make a new Law: What was this to give Faith footing, or to qualifie the Person to be the proper object of saving Faith? Since it is not barely Christ, but *Christ crucified*, that *Paul* desires to know and Preach. *1 Cor. 2. 2, For this cause he is the Mediatour of the New Testament, that by means of death, they which are called, might receive the promise of eternal inheritance, Heb. 9. 15.*

A Mediatour is either first, by intercession as *Job*, on the behalf of *Absolom*, *2 Sam. 14. 33.* Or 2. by power, as *Abraham* to *Lot*, *Gen. 14. 15.* Or, 3. By price and ransom: Such are common amongst us, that buy off Slaves from the Turkish oppression. Christ is our Mediatour all these ways:

1. By intercession, *Rom. 8. 34, Who also maketh intercession for us, Heb. 7. 25.*

2. By Power, *Joh. 8. 36, If the son shall make you free, &c. Rom 7. 25, I thank God through Jesus Christ, by whom he hoped to be delivered:*

For



For he had been sadly complaining of his captivity.

3. By Price, or Redemption, 1 Tim. 2. 5, 6, *There is one mediatur betwixt God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom.*

3dly, As invested with saving offices, that he might be a meet Mediator: besides the qualification of his person, he is invested with several offices in relation to this work; which are all needful to him that will perfectly redeem fallen man. As of a Prophet, *Act. 3. 22, 23, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, &c. Every soul which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed.* Of a Priest, *Heb. 7. 17, Thou art a Priest for ever, &c.* Of a King, *Psal. 2. 6, I have set my king upon my holy hill of Sion.*

We have now found the material object of saving Faith. This God-man, Mediatour, King, Priest, Prophet, is the Person to be believed on: But it yet remains to enquire:

Quest. 2. *What is that thing in Christ, which formally and properly saves a sinner, being apprehended, and laid hold upon, as the merit and matter of his Salvation?*

Ans. It is Christ, as satisfying Divine justice, and meriting for us pardon and Salvation by his active and passive obedience, (which is called his righteousness; pray observe it) and so 'tis properly the Priesthood of Christ.

Arg. 1. Because, so he is our righteousness. It is Christs being righteousness to us, which saves us: for so we have that which strictly and fully answers the demand of the Law: and when that

is done, God acquits us. *Rom. 8. 4, That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, δικαιομα jus legis*; We being déad, and condemned in Christ; by Faith we are counted as just, as if we our selves had satisfied the Law. *Calv. 1 Joh. 2. 2, We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*

*Arg. 2.* It is that which our faith is properly directed to in Scripture, *Rom. 3. 25, Whom God hath set forth for a propitiation, through faith in his blood. ιλαστήριον proprie significat instrumentum placationis.* See *Heb. 9. 5.* It is that *cujus intuitu*, at the sight of which God becomes merciful and gracious. *Gal. 3. 13, Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, εὐπὲς ἡμῶν καὶ ἄρα maledictum, a Curse in our stead. Vers. 14, That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles, through Jesus Christ. Heb. 9. 15, That by means of death, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance, θανάτου γενομένου εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν, Death being made for the redemption.*

*Arg. 3.* Christ is thus the end of the Law for righteousness. *Rom. 10. 4, Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone which believes.* The Law hath no further process, because it finds what it seeks, in Christ. There it hath what it would have, its full perfection, its utmost demand; and therefore, *non movet ulterius litem*, it contends no further. *Vers. 10, with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation, i. e. believing and confessing Jesus Christ, we have righteousness to salvation; and the Law gives an acquittance.*

*Arg.*

*Arg. 4.* This the whole ceremonial Law leads us to: All the Sacrifices typified Christ, he was the Paschal Lamb, at whose sight the destroying Angel passed over: As these were but patterns of heavenly things, i. e. of things in the Church under the Gospel, Heb. 9. 23. So we see what answers them, vers. 26, *But now once in the end of the world, he hath appeared to put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself.*

*Object. 1.* Against this the Papists object, that Christ died to merit that we might be sanctified, (which they call first justification) and then being sanctified, we do by our own works merit salvation.

*Ans. 1.* But pray consider the place cited, Rom. 3. 25, *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, i. e. a reconciliation by death; which is signified by his blood: If by his death, then not our worthiness.*

2. If Christ died, to declare that God was just, strictly just, *ὅς ἐστιν ἀνὸρ δίκαιος*, that he would not bate the sinner a Farthing; then without Christs Blood they must fall under the judgment of God. Where observe [*That he may be righteous*] is explained by that; [*That he might be just*] and not contrariwise: Which will stop the mouth of another objection. But,

3. What will they say to Rom. 4. 6? *Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness without works. As vers. 5, But unto him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.* If it be righteous-

ness without works, it must needs be imputed righteousness a Man is blessed by.

4. It is clear, the Apostle's dispute *Rom. 4*, is, whether a Man be justified by Faith, or by Works? And 'tis wholly attributed to Faith alone. If any think, that faith without works in the person will do: I am to speak to that afterwards. Works are not denied, *quod existentiam*, sed *quoad meritum*, as to their existency, but merit.

Object. 2. Others there are, who though they will not say, as the Papists, that we can strictly merit salvation by our doing; yet say, that Christs obedience was only to procure (as they call it) an acceptilation with God, i. e. that a little sincerity might serve turn, and be accepted for salvation, in se, & per se, of, and for it self.

Ans. Observe here, both of them agree in this, that we are saved by an inward righteousness: But more particularly,

Ans. 1. Then Christ dyed to destroy the Law, or to lax it, *καταλῦσαι*, and not to fulfill it; contrary to his own word, *Matt. 5. 17*, *Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfill.* i. e. Christ came not to make the Law not to demand its due of a sinner; but to give its demand, by fulfilling what it required.

2. This is contrary also to *Rom. 3. 26*, *God set him forth for a propitiation, to declare his righteousness, that he might be just; though a justifier of him that belives in Jesus.* Gods justice requires the full, and the whole; and Christ died to declare his justice, by giving in the whole: Therefore

fore it was not to bring it down to an acceptation.

3. Consider, how the Apostle applies the Law in its most rigorous demand to Christians that were apostatizing from faith alone. *Gal. 3. 10, For as many as are of the works of the Law, are under the curse: for it is written, cursed is every one that continues not in all things, &c.* To let them know, that if they will be saved this way, it is a perfect and exact righteousness they must have; and that since, and notwithstanding the death of Christ.

We grant, that God doth not reject, but accept the sincere obedience of his servants, and rewards it too: But it is because their persons are first accepted in the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. See *1 Pet. 2. 5, To offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ.*

Object. 3. *But do not Divines commonly say, we must receive whole Christ, King, Priest, and Prophet, if we will be saved? A divided Christ will not serve?*

*Answ.* 'Tis true, we say so; for all Christs offices are to our purpose and advantage: But the question at present, is not, whether Faith receive not Christ, as King, Prophet, and Priest: But what is that special thing it acts upon, for pardon, and Salvation? What is its proper act, *qua justificat*, whereby it justifies and saves? *Multa enim ad justificationem requiruntur, que ipsa non justificant.* *Ames. contra Bill.* Many things are required to justification, which do not themselves justify. *Quæritur quæ sit ratio, quæ proprie dicitur justificare?* We ask upon what account it is said properly to justify? R 3 Qu.



Qu. 3. *I now come to enquire, whether Christ be not to be received as Prophet, and King, as well as Priest? Because I would not be willingly wanting to you, in any thing which should set you right in so great a matter as the object of Faith is?*

Ans. Yea.

● Arg. 1. Because there is nothing in Christs Mediatorship; but is to be made use of by Faith. But his Kingly and Prophetical offices are part of his Mediatorship.

1. Because he is a Mediatour by power, as well as by price: *To deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, Luk. 1. 74,* as well as to redeem from Gods justice. A Prophet, to deliver from the power of darkness: And a King, from the power of our lusts. And this is as needful a discovery, in a sense, to the soul under its lost estate, as the former; because, though coming to Christ will save it from guilt; yet it cannot see which way it should come, and escape out of the hands of its corruption. Now to eye the kingly and prophetical Offices of Jesus Christ, as furnishing to this, is that which draws the soul out to Faith, under all discouragements.

2. These are necessary also, to continue the soul in a persevering estate.

Arg. 2. God requires love and obedience, or submission to his Son, as well as Faith in him. *Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish, Ps. 2. 12.* God having set his King upon his holy hill of Sion, *vers. 6,* gives this admonition to great ones, *vers. 10, Be wise now therefore, O ye Kings: be instructed ye judges of the earth. Vers. 11, Serve the Lord with fear. Vers. 12, Kiss the son,*  
 &c.

&c. So Christ himself declares his mind, *Luk. 19. 27, Those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.* Whence I argue, if they be enemies, who will not that Christ should reign over them; Then Believers receive Christ as King, and Prophet, as well as Priest: For they cannot be supposed to be friends and enemies together.

*Arg. 3.* Else a Man should be under the curse, and under the blessing, at the same time: under the blessing, as having Faith, *Gal. 3. 9, So then, they that be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham:* under the curse, as not having a Faith which works by love. *1 Cor. 16. 22, If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be Anathema,* &c.

*Arg. 4.* Else Faith were a dead Faith, if it be without works, or put not the soul upon subjection to Jesus Christ. *Jam. 2. 17, Faith, if it have not works, is dead, being alone.*

*Arg. 5.* Saving Faith would else exist without any other grace, and with the dominion of sin in the soul, at the same time: But they that are Christs, have crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts, *Gal. 5. 24,* as to the reign of them at least. *How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?* *Rom. 6. 2.*

*Arg. 6.* Faith is the act of a converted creature, *Joh. 1. 12 13, Even to them which believe in his name: which were born not of blood, &c.* but of God *ἐγενήσαντο*, *1 Joh. 5. 1, Whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, i. e. whoever by a special assent, as before: And what-*

ever is born of the spirit, is spirit, *Joh. 3. 6, i. e.* spiritual; and so suits with all things that are spiritual; therefore with Christ as King, and Prophet.

*Arg. 7.* From *Rom. 8. 1, 4, They who are in Christ Jesus, are such who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.* And therefore have respect to Jesus Christ, as sanctifying; or in his prophetic, and kingly Offices.

*Arg. 8.* This Faith on Christ's priesthood, is either holy, or unholy: If unholy, it can never be a *nexus*, or band of union between Christ and the Soul; if holy, then by consequence they submit to Christ as King and Prophet.

*Arg. 9.* They receive Christ whole, and all that truly receive him. Mind the Text, *Act. 16. 31, Believe in the Lord Jesus, &c. Col. 2. 6, As ye have received Jesus Christ the Lord.*

Thus having briefly dispatched what I thought necessary to be spoken, I shall gather up the sum of this discourse, and conclude with a few confectaries. The material object of Faith, you see, is the person of Christ, God-man, Mediator, as invested with all those saving-offices; but the formal object, or that which Faith hath peculiarly to eye, as the merit and matter of its non-condemnation and salvation, is Christ working righteousness.

*Confect. 1.* If Christ as Priest, be the proper object of Faith, as saving (as before explained) this directs us where to place our hope and confidence, *viz.* in his person, God-man, as having done and suffered, whatever might bring us into favour with God. As the general part calls

calls us to receive him; so this in special to eye his righteousness. Recourse to him as a King hath great security against the violence of corruption, a wicked heart, and a raging Devil, *who as a roaring Lion walks about, &c.* 1 Pet. 5. 8. And Application to him as a Prophet, against the subtilty of the heart, and the blinds of Satan: But that which gives us confidence at the Throne of Grace, when the Conscience hath to do with God, as an incensed, provoked, Majesty, or a just Judg, is Jesus Christ working righteousness. *Heb. 10. 19, Having therefore brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus, &c.* 22. *Let us draw near with true hearts, in full assurance of faith, &c.* We find him therefore called our hope, 1 Tim. 1. 1, *And Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope; The rock,* Mat. 16. 18. *Rest,* Matt. 11. 28. *City of refuge,* Heb. 6. 18. Nothing therefore of our own will serve turn in this case. *Gal. 5. 3, Thou art a debtour to do the whole law.* The High Priest went into the second Tabernacle alone, not without blood, *Heb. 9. 7.*

*Confess. 2.* Must we receive Christ, Lord and King, Prophet as well as Priest: This detects the grand cheat, and unravels the common error of the whole World; who say, they are willing to be saved by Christ, but are not willing to be ruled by him: will have their sins, will live in ignorance. *Heb. 5. 9, He became the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him.* The Epistles of James and John are directly against such persons. 1 Joh. 3. 6, *Whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him.* Vers. 8, *He that*

that committeth sin, is of the Devil. They who sin, and will sin, chuse to sin. *Jam. 2. 14, What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and hath not works? can faith save him? i. e.* Can such a Faith save him? And proves it cannot, by the instance of a cold charity. *Ver. 15. 16, If a brother or a sister be naked, and destitute of dayly food. And one of you say unto them, depart in peace, be you warmed, and filled: notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit? i. e.* feed them with good words only, and clothe them with good language: Is this a good charity? *Vers. 17, Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead being alone.* And then proves *Abrahams* Faith, whereby he was justified, was a living Faith, a working Faith; as appeared eminently, by offering up his Son. And yet *vers. 23,* concludes himself to be of the same mind with *Paul,* *And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness, Gen. 16. 6. Rom. 4. 3.* Oh take heed therefore, of undoing your selves with a lifeless fancy, and inoperative Faith, that hath no change upon the heart and life.

3 If the person of Christ Mediatour, as invested with those Offices, be the object of saving Faith: This proves what I have sometimes hinted, that there is full content and satisfaction to be found in Jesus Christ: He is a most admirable suitable object, for every poor, sensible sinner. Cast about, and consider, What will satisfy the soul but God? He is God, God-man: And what will satisfy a lost Soul, but one in whom is suitable



able fulness? Christ as invested with these Offices, hath whatever you need, whatever you can desire. Art thou at a loss, how to get into the favour of God? Here is Christ satisfying. Art thou at a loss how to get Faith, and those graces which accompany Salvation? he is a Prophet and a King to this purpose; he is a proper person, wherein to find peace, pardon, content, what not? *Cant.* 1. 3, *His name is as ointment poured forth.*

4. Consider well of this person: This is the object propounded to your Faith; he is not yours without your consent. *Rom.* 10. 10, *With the heart man believes.* And whoever consents to a Person unseen, that doth not view him and observe him? That you may have him, you must think well of him, that he may have your heart. A Woman, that hath a Person propounded for Marriage, views and eyes him. The Spouse in the *Canticles* could run over the excellencies in particular of her beloved, *Cant.* 5. from 10, to 16. This is that draws forth your Faith: See whether he hath not what will take you.

5. And Lastly, Labour to have your thoughts more express, and distinct, concerning Jesus Christ in the latitude of all his saving properties; who is a Saviour, not only from the wrath to come, but your present unbelief, rebellious heart, and what not?

Thus much briefly to have discoursed of the object.

## CHAP. III.

**I** Now proceed to the act, in relation to this object. Where, I hope, I shall not be counted to insist upon matter of speculation, or little importance: For I know nothing of greater concernment than these two; The proper object, and the right acting towards that object. I have always counted (since I knew any thing) matter of Faith of as great consequence, as matter of practice: For I know not who is most divided; he that builds without a foundation, or he that upon the foundation builds nothing but *straw and stubble*, 1 Cor. 3. 11, 12.

*Observ. 2. Faith on the Lord Jesus Christ, is the true saving Faith. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*

In speaking to it, I shall first give you the true nature of this true Faith, in this definition.

Saving Faith is a gracious habit, wrought in the whole Soul, whereby it apprehends and receives Jesus Christ for Salvation: which habit is infused by the special work of the spirit of God in and upon us.

I put this clause last, because I chose to speak to it in the last place.

Faith is sometimes called an act: 1. Because of its relation unto the object. And 2. Because the

the perfection of the habit is in its acting: But I rather call it an habit, for these Reasons.

1. Because the act cannot be without habit, in ordinary: For the Tree must be good, before you can make the fruit good; the heart must first be right, before the issue of it can be right: There must be a believing frame, in order of nature, before there can be a believing. *Actus est efflorescentia habitus*, the act is the flow'ring of the habit. 'Tis true in Morals, the acts are before the habits; because the habits are produced, *ex repetitis actibus*, by repeated acts: But in Divine habits, there must first be an infusion, *Jam. 1. 17. ἀνωθεν ἐστὶ, &c.*

2. Because a true Believer is yet a true Believer, when he believes, *in actu secundo*, actually: He is a believer, when he sleeps, as well as when he wakes; when he works, as well as when he believes: Yea, it is true, even when he sins through unbelief. Christ tells *Peter* before-hand, to keep him from sinking, *I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not, Luk. 22. 32.* Fail not! It failed in act. He was so far from confessing Christ, at the present, that he denyed him thrice: But yet it did not fail, *ex toto*, wholly: Therefore Christs look recovered him again to his right mind, by quickning the habit.

3. I call it a habit, that you may understand, that faith is not acting towards Christ once in our life time, or once in a year; as if it were an instrument to be made use of only at a streight. *Heb. 10. 38, The just shall live by faith: we are of those that believe to the saving of the soul.* Yet what I speak here, I would not have construed

strued to the prejudice of a death-bed Faith; as if it could not be true by any means.

4. That we may exclude half-motions, and half-perswasions, some imperfect glances and velleities towards Jesus Christ; as that of *Agrippa*, *Almost thou perswadest me to be a Christian*, ὃν ολίγω με πείθεεις. We do not read that ever he came farther. It is not under the warmth of a Sermon, or some common quickening, to be carried out in a kind of a passionate perswasion towards the Lord Jesus: (they could find in their heart, &c.) but upon deliberation, or *tantamount*, (*i. e.* as well advised as if deliberate): To make a free choice of him, and have their heart run after him, I mean, hanging and hankering this way. It is therefore compared to a *Well of water*, Joh. 4. 14.

5. Because the act of faith is a vital act: and I do not understand how this can be, unless there be an habit infused to make the soul actually to will, and chuse Jesus Christ. There must be something put into the will which shall dispose it this way, *Certum est, non velle cum volumus, sed ille facit, ut velimus*, Aug. It is certain we will, when we will; but he makes that we will, not only by influencing the habit, but infusing. Yet I grant,

*Concess.* 1. Faith may very properly be called an act; as the Philosophers call the soul the act of the body ἐντελεχεια τῆς σαματός; because it is that which quickens the soul, and makes it alive to God; which yet I speak not in a separation from other Graces.

*Concess.* 2. The Soul may at the very moment of

of its infusion, act towards Jesus Christ: for the Spirit having wrought the principle, may immediately also influence, and draw it into act: though the soul be first in nature passive, in relation to it; yet it may at the same moment of time be active also.

*Concess.* 3. The soul is then in best plight, when together with the habit it hath the act also. It is sad to think, Christians that have true faith, may yet be poor believers.

*Concess.* 4. The actings of faith may be very quick, and imperceptible; as the acts of the soul are, with which they are mixt: as the water hath its under-ground-workings.

2. It is a gracious habit to distinguish it from all natural inclination; as some men have great advantage of others, unto some moral vertues, as charity, compassion, candour, affability, clemency, liberality, hospitality, &c. From a natural ingenuity: So towards Christ, they may seem to be forward in believing from a natural credulity; whereby they are ready to believe every thing according to that of *Solomon*, Prov. 14. 5, *The simple believeth every word.* Christ is no more beholden to any of these men, than to the *Pope*, or *Mahomet*: should they happen to live where these had the common vote, especially of the great ones, and wise ones, they were as ready to entertain them, as Christ himself. *Have any of the rulers, or the Pharisees believed on him?* Joh. 7. 48, would go a great way with these men. To be no more inclined to receive Jesus Christ, than Antichrist, or any other that should come in his own name, is such a faith as Christ utterly disowns, and rejects as unbelief.

2. From



2. From a natural facility, or easiness of persuasion: some people are of such facile tempers, you may persuade them almost any thing, within bounds of civility; especially some that have interest in them. They will easily be of their Fathers religion, their Mothers persuasion, or their Doctours faith: *Having mens persons in admiration*, Jude 16. But Jesus Christ regards not such a faith, because it depends not upon the excellency of the person commended, but the person commending.

3. From general desires of being happy. 'Tis not every one that desires to be happy, that is presently a believer: for every one would so: and because they hear that Jesus Christ is the way, therefore they seem to have some general compliance with him. Whereas they would have him their servant only, not their Lord; their help only at a dead list, rather than as the author of life to them. Thus when Christ had said, *Joh. 6. 33, The bread of God is he which cometh down from Heaven, and giveth life to the world*: the multitude that followed, cryed out, *Lord, evermore give us this bread*, v. 34. So the woman of *Samaria*, before ever she had any express knowledg of Jesus Christ, but he had only told her, *Joh. 4. 14, Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst*; cryes out, *Sir, give me this water*, v. 15. People under the hear-say that there is no Salvation but in Christ; are ready to say, O give me this Christ; that neither know him nor the way to him, or are willing of his terms.

2. It is a gracious habit; because proceeding from

from the grace of God, 1 Cor. 15. 10, *By the grace of God I am what I am.* And so, it is distinguished from all meer Moral Vertues, which have nothing of a special concurrence, but only are the excitations and products of a natural power. As all grace proceeds from the meer grace or favour of God, so in peculiar, this grace of Faith, Rom. 11. 32, *He hath concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercy.*

3. It is a gracious habit, because it makes us gracious, *i. e.* freely disposes us towards God and Christ, by working a resemblance of the Original whence it comes. As Grace in God is the dilating and opening of his heart to us in a way of special mercy; so grace in us opens and dilates our hearts to him again, and in peculiar this grace of Faith. Therefore you find that usually when Christ in the days of his flesh, called any after him, they presently follow him, and pressed into his service: That a man might wonder, as *Elijah* said, *What have I done unto thee? While we with open face behold the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image,* 2 Cor. 3. 18. Gods grace makes us gracious, free-hearted towards him.

Quest. *How may we know whether we have such an habit of Faith? or what doth it imply in its proper work upon the soul?*

Ans. 1. There is an high estimation of Jesus Christ planted in that soul: Christ is as it were formed in the heart, Gal. 4. 19: an impress made of him, must needs make him glorious in our eye: As they cried out, *whether should we go, thou hast the words of eternal life?* Joh. 6. 68. The name of

*Jesus Christ is glorified in them,* 2. Thes. 1. ult. *ἐνδοξάζεται*, is made glorious in them, *Cant* 2. 3, *As the Apple-tree amongst the trees of the wood: so is my beloved amongst the sons,* says the Spouse. There is no compare of the trees of the wood to the Apple-tree: No more is there of any person to Christ, in his mind who truly believes.

2. It implies a sweet inclination of heart towards Jesus Christ, so as to seek union and communion with him. How sweet is bread to the hungry! how pleasant is water to the thirsty! *Rev.* 22. 13, *He that is a-thirst come.* The name of Christ before was but a name with him, but now it is *dulce nomen*: *Like an oyntment poured forth.* *Cant.* 1. 3, *Thy name is as oyntment poured forth.* It was before as an oyntment in the *Apothecaries* pot, that had an excellent name and superscription; but he never had the scent of it, because it was not poured out; but now he runs, because he scents it. To such a one Christ is as sweet as a Rose, *The Rose of Sharon*, *Cant.* 2. 1. of all sweets the sweetest.

3. It implies a constancy in the soul; it is never weary of him. Weary it is, because it hath no more of him, *Heb.* 10. ult. *We are not of those which draw back to perdition, but of those which believe, to the saving of the soul.* Though as to some actions, or the manifest actings of Faith, he is much at a loss sometimes; yet he is always hanging and hankering Christ-ward: he will not desert him by any means, *i. e.* freely and deliberately give him up, as first he chose him. *Peter*, when he denied, *went out and wept bitterly,* *Mat.* 26. ult. If he cannot believe, he complains he cannot; if he  
mis

miss him, he runs after him; if he find him, he rejoices; he bemoans himself if he finds him not. All the Devils in Hell shall never make him deliberately part with him, as he chose him.

*Confess.* 1. Is it an habit? Then every believer hath a root in him, whereby he is sincerely inclined to Jesus Christ. His Faith is not such a kind of loose inconsiderate boldness, to go to him with some kind of confidence upon every act of seeming repentance, it may be upon every (*Lord have mercy*) to take out his pardon (as some kind of notions men have, that God is gracious and propitious through him), when God knows, he cares not at all for his person. But he that is a believer, is *joyned to the Lord, and is one spirit with him*, 1 Cor. 6. 17. There is something on the soul's part as well as on Christ's part: It is not Christ's apprehending him only, but he apprehends Christ, and lays hold on him, *Isa. 27. 5, Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me.* You always find an union in Faith, there is consent on both sides, as they say: *amicitia est benevolentia mutua*, friendship is a mutual good will.

2. Then there is something in every true believer, which might prove him to be so, when he is in the dark as to sense and discovery (the Sun is not cancel'd out of the Heavens, because it is hid under a Cloud); a sweet inclination, a rooted inclination towards Jesus Christ: For so Faith is: For what is an habit, but that which inclines? And what is an habit of Faith, but what inclines to Jesus Christ? And I mean not partially, as the Author of happiness in the general notion of it alone, *Cant. 5. 8, If you find him, tell him I am*

*sick.* If they could but reflect upon this, it were enough to prove him theirs.

Is it a gracious habit?

*Confess.* 1. Then how vainly and ignorantly do they speak, that say, They have believed ever since they were born, or can remember? *Believers are born not of blood,* 1 Joh. 1. 13. It is not from thy stock, or Parents: thou mayst have had good Parents, and thy self be bad enough. What a deplorable instance are the *Jews*, *Abraham's seed*? They that are *children of the promise*, as *Isaac was*, *are born after the spirit*, Gal. 4. 28, 29. I deny not, but a person may be born with grace (but then it is not of nature, but of grace), or have it very early: Yet, this is not so common; witness the persons who commonly say so, which I am now speaking to.

2. This should for ever bring us into despair of our selves, as being able to perform the condition of the Gospel-covenant. People that are convinc'd, and under the workings of Conversion, are apt to think, that though Christ save them by merit, yet they of themselves must perform what he requires, the condition of the Gospel, *viz.* Believing; but you must be beholding to Jesus Christ for all, as well for Faith, as Justification upon Faith: *By grace ye are saved, through faith; and that not of your selves, it is the gift of God,* Eph. 2. 8.

3. This shews the faith of the world generally to be counterfeit; for if faith be a gracious disposition, that bears the impress of that grace whence it comes, and makes us free towards him again: Then that faith which makes men rather worse



worse than better, (as commonly the faith of the world doth) can be no true faith; because they believe they shall be saved, therefore they go on more confidently and presumptuously in their sins. Examine your hearts, and see whether it be not so with you. I but touch upon this here, because I have spoken more largely to this purpose elsewhere.

# CHAP. IV.

**I** Now proceed to the Subject of Faith, wrought in the whole soul.

Leaving the School-men to agree among themselves, how one habit can be in two faculties, or whether it be one or more: This is clear (as I hope will appear), that Saving-faith must be in both faculties, mind and heart.

To make the better way to the following Discourse,

*Premise* 1. Assent is either to a Proposition, or the Person of Christ, *John* 6. 40. 1 *John* 3. 6.

*Prem.* 2. Assent unto the truth concerning Jesus Christ, from the infalliable authority of Gods Word, is called Divine Faith in the general, *Joh.* 2. 23. Chap. 4. 42.

*Prem.* 3. This Faith or Assent, is either common or special, as before, *page* 3.

*Prem.* 4. Assent unto the truth concerning Jesus Christ, necessarily precedes Assent unto the

Person, 1 John 2. 24, *If that which ye have heard from the beginning, shall remain in you; ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.*

Now, to prove to you that Faith is an act of the mind, consider well these Scriptures, *Isa. 53. 11, By his knowledge, i. e. by the knowledge of him, shall my righteous servant justify many.* John 17. 3, *This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent, &c.* John. 6. 40, *That every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, &c.* Gal. 1. 15, 16, *When it pleased God to reveal his Son in me, &c.* John 6. 45, *Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh to me.* 1 John 5. 20, *And hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true.*

And it must needs be so.

1. For the heart can never be brought to consent to Christ, and be united to him, but by sight and discovery of him; for the will is never forced, but drawn: Therefore 'tis, *Whosoever seeth the Son, and believeth, &c.* Who chuses a person unseen? Hence it is promised, when the spirit of truth should come, *he should glorify Christ,* Joh. 16. 14. *δοξάσει*, work high and honourable esteems of him in the soul: How so? *He shall receive of mine, and shew it unto you. He is white and ruddy,* says the Spouse, *Cant. 5. 10, i. e. of most perfect exact beauty; White, in his absolute transparent glory; Ruddy, in his relative condescending glory; becoming a Crucified Saviour for us.*

2. For there is a necessary connexion between the discovery of him, *i. e. the spiritual discovery* and closing with him, *John 6. 45, Every man that*  
*hath*

*bath heard, and hath learned of the Father, comes; i. e. to whom Christ is commended by the inward teachings of the Father, that man comes. Therefore in that Text, 1 John 5. 20, The Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding to know him that is true. It follows: and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ.*

Now this Assent to him (I shall only mention a few particulars here, because very proper, having insisted elsewhere to the same purpose) must be,

1. Unto him as real, *i. e.* that there was such a Person that wrought righteousness, *i. e.* did, and suffered upon our account, *John 8. 24, If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins, Joh. 16. 10.*

2. Unto him as incomparably excellent, *Isa. 4. 2, In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious: In that day, i. e. when the Jews shall come to own him a Saviour, whom they now Blaspheme. The branch of the Lord, i. e. Jesus Christ. Be beautiful and glorious, Hebrew, beauty and glory in the abstract, i. e. most beautiful, most glorious, the abstract being put for the superlative, See Isa. 11. 10. Phil. 3. 8. Mat. 13. 45, 46.*

3. Unto him as suitable to me, good for me, as *David* says, *Psal. 73. ult. Joh. 6. 68, To whom shall we go! thou hast the words of eternal life.*

Quest Whether this Assent must be a firm Assent, as our Divines have defined it? Fides est assensus firmus, Faith is a firm assent. Chemnit. Martyr.

Ans. 1. It is not so firm as to exclude an exposedness to doubting; for that naturally follows

unbelief. Unbelief will never cease to play the Devil, any more than the Devil himself, so long as it remains in the heart unrestrained: *Can the Ethiopian change his skin?* Jer. 13. 23. Though Faith take down the reign of it, yet it does not take away the remains of it.

*Ans.* 2. It is not so firm as to exclude all actual doubting: *O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?* Mat. 14. 31. It is Peter himself here reproved. *We trusted it had been he that should have redeemed Israel,* say the two Disciples, Luk. 24. 21. *Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief,* Mar. 9. 24. It is a hard matter to keep up a clear Assent unto the truths of the Gospel, because here a man is put to a total denial of himself. Sense, reason, and all but meer pure faith, are against it, as one says: The opposition of corruption is sometimes more violent; the concurrence of the Devil sometimes greater; the assistance of the Spirit in its inlightning discoveries, convictions, is not always the same.

3. A partial doubting, or doubting in part, will of necessity be, because, *If we know but in part,* 1 Cor. 13. 9, we can Assent but in part, and an absolute fulness of faith, and perswasion, would exclude infirmity, which is heavens qualification.

4. In times of temptation, and distempers of melancholy, it may be very great at such a time; it may be true of many, what is reported of an Eminent man, *That in the judgment of his friend, he had grace enough for ten men; yet all too little for himself.* Blake of the Covenant, p. 500.

But Positively.

1. It is so firm an Assent, as to determine the judg -

judgment one way, *John* 4. 42, *We know that this is indeed the Christ.* Therefore it is called the acknowledgment of the truth, and not bare knowledg only, *Eph.* 1. 17, *That he may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the acknowledgment of him,* ἐν ἐμύνησιν αὐτοῦ, *2 Tim.* 2. 25. *If God, peradventure may give them repentance, to the acknowledgment of the truth:* Which signifies an owning a thing in particular. For when we have only general apprehensions of, and Assent unto the truth, and more particular assent to the goodness of the World, sin, and creature; then particular apprehensions prevail against the general Assent. And on the contrary, &c.

2. It is so firm, as to be a practical principle to the soul. So firm, as to have the leading, commanding voice in the main. *Joh.* 6. 45, *He that hath heard and learned of the father, comes.* Before I leave this question, give me leave to English to you a few passages, in that learned Divine Chemnitius. *Lucta vel in assensione, vel in desiderio, vel in fiducia, non est signum incredulitatis.* Conflict either in assent, or in desire, or confidence, is no sign of incredulity: i. e. absolute incredulity.

*Fidem jam in hoc jam in illo gradu magis laborare, & tamen esse fidem.* Faith is more weak, sometimes in this degree, sometimes in that, and yet is true Faith.

*In singulis hisce gradibus, virtutem Dei in infirmitate perfici.* In these several degrees the power of God is made perfect in weakness.

*Fides enim justificans, nec semper, nec in omnibus, est lux ardens; sed saepe linum, vix fumigans:*

non



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*non semper clamor sonorus, sed saepe desiderium obscurum.* For justifying faith, neither always, nor in all, is a burning light; but oftentimes flax hardly smoaking: not always a loud cry, but oftentimes an obscure desire. *L. com lib. 2. cap. de justif. p. 270.* He quotes for it, *Matt. 14. 31. Rom. 14. 1.*

2. Faith is an act of the heart, or of the will, as appears,

1. By plain Scriptures. *Act. 8. 37, If thou believest with all thy heart.* *Rom. 10. 10, With the heart man believes.*

2. It is explained by such acts as are the acts of the heart.

1. It is described by receiving. *Joh. 1. 12, To as many as received him, he gave priviledg, &c.* *Col. 2. 6, As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, &c.*

2. By coming, *Joh. 5. 39, Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life.* *Joh. 6. 35, I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth in me, shall never thirst.* *Verf. 37, And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.* What is coming, but *actus appetitus rationalis*, the act of the rational desire, i. e. the will?

3. Scripture promiscuously uses the act of the mind, and the act of the heart; as implying one the other. Faith is sometimes described by knowledg, as including the act of the will also, *Isa. 53. 11, By his knowledg shall my righteous servant justifie many:* And sometimes by the act of the will, as presupposing knowledg; *Rom. 10. 10, With the heart man believes.*

4. The

4. The will being the commanding-power, the Soul never comes to Christ, till that come. *Rev.* 22. 17, *Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*

*Qu. Are there not other acts of faith, besides this of the will?*

*Ans.* Yea, there are; though they cannot be separate from it: as 1. Acts of Recumbency. 2. Acts of Confidence. I omit that of Assurance, because it seems rather an act of knowledge, than of faith; though faith must precede.

1. Acts of Recumbency; which seem to have something of a venture, and some mixture of Confidence. Thus Faith is often expressed, *Psal.* 37. 5, *Commit thy ways unto the Lord, trust also in him, &c.* There may be many a person in a thirsting, longing way, that is posed to come up to this act.

2. Acts of Confidence. *Heb.* 10. 35, *Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.* *Chap.* 4. ult. *Let us come boldly to the throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, &c.*

These two, though they are excellent acts of Faith; when the soul can upon Gospel-grounds and principles rise up to them: (I say upon Gospel-grounds because many are confident upon other grounds) yet if there be a willingness to receive the Lord Jesus, this I count the first act of Faith; and that which puts the person into a safe condition. The soul may be very earnestly willing to receive Christ in his latitude; and yet not dare to give the venture, or be confident in him:

him : because it may suppose it presumption ; or think it is too much for it.

Assurance having been counted an act of Faith, and there being something of faith in it, I shall speak a few words to it.

3. Then Assurance is properly the belief of a proposition ; as, *he that believes shall be saved.* I believe, therefore I shall be saved. Assurance is the perswasion of this last proposition, or conclusion. A man may believe this, That *he that believes shall be saved* ; but not being able to see that he believes, cannot make the comfortable conclusion, Therefore I shall be saved. There goes something, an exact knowledg to assurance, (unless it please God to act the soul so high, that it comes under the qualification of any, or many acts of Faith) as,

1. Of the true nature of saving Faith. For, I must know certainly, what that is, before I can know, whether I have it or no. Now Divines themselves having differed in this matter, (though there was always that which was saving maintained ) people especially may be at a loss herein.

2. Knowledg to discern this. A man may know what Faith is, and yet not be able to discern that he hath that in himself in truth ; though he may perhaps see something like it, which comes partly from the deceitfulness of the heart, the subtilty of the Devil, the violence of temptation, the fumes of temper, and more especially the suspension of the spirit. *Ames*, that lived nearer those days, wherein this Opinion, *That Faith was assurance*, was more prevailing:

Yet

Yet says, *Atque adeo sufficiat ad fidei esse, si quis toto corde, eligat Christum pro servatore suo, & corde toto adhareat ipsi*: Quoting Col. 2. 6, 7. L. 2. *De cas. conscientie*, c. 7. p. 63. It is sufficient to the being of Faith, if a man with his whole heart chuse Christ for his Saviour, and cleave to him with his whole heart. And Chemnitius, that lived in those days, yet says: *De fide non est statuendum ex sensu consolationis, & gaudii spiritualis. Sequitur, fiduciam non esse de essentia fidei*. And again: *Deus sensum illum pacis credentibus sæpe subtrahit*, p. 276. *de justif.* We must not conclude of Faith from the sense of comfort and spiritual joy. It follows, confidence is not of the essence of Faith. God often withdraws that sense of peace from believers.

Is Faith Assent, or an act of the mind?

**Corralary 1.** Then, all ignorant persons are set aside as unbelievers. Faith saves not, but as it lays hold on the person that saves, and that is by consent and assent; which can never be without knowledg. O that people would believe but this one thing, that if they be absolutely ignorant, they must needs be unbelievers. Christians are described by their knowledg, *Gal. 4. 9, But after ye have known God, &c.* 1 John 2. 13, *I write unto you little children, because ye have known the Father*. Even the little children, the least in Christ's School know him.

**Cor. 2.** Then, what convictions have you wrought in your minds concerning the Lord Jesus? What apprehensions, what judgments, what persuasions, not only what of hear-say? *Joh. 16. 10, He shall convince the world of righteousness*. Have you heard and been taught by the Father concerning his

Son

Son? *John* 6. 45. Have you heard Jesus Christ himself Preach? *Eph.* 4. 21, *If so be ye have heard him, and been taught by him.* Did the *Ephesians* hear Christ himself preach? Sure Christ was dead before they heard the Gospel, and yet they heard Christ, *i. e.* Christ did make spiritual discoveries of himself to them in the preaching of the Gospel. The question is then, What convictions have you in-wrought in your minds and judgments? For these make Faith.

*Cor.* 3. Then, you must feed your minds by meditations concerning him. Take heed you do not starve your souls. What do you think that Scripture means, *Jude* v. 20, *But ye, beloved, building up your selves on your most holy faith?* Can you build up your selves upon the principles of the Gospel (which are here called the most holy faith), and consequently on Jesus Christ? Is not he *the author and finisher of faith?* *Heb.* 12. 3. Yea, yet notwithstanding *Paul* and the Apostles were *labourers and workers together with him,* *1 Cor.* 3. 9. *2 Cor.* 6. 1, And so must you be in relation to your selves. The Tree sucks that nourishment, whereby it is rooted. The Reason why Christ is so little to us, is because we neglect him, and the testimony of him; feed not our thoughts with that report, nor dwell not upon those representations he hath made of himself: often read over his Letters, often view his Picture, if you would have Christ imprinted in your mind.

*Cor.* 4. Pray continually, that Jesus Christ would manifest himself to you, and shew you the things concerning himself, he hath written in his Word. Christ is a mystery, and a great mystery, far above our ken and reach. Christ himself must



must manifest himself. *Job. 14. 22.* Often go to him for it. *But ye beloved, building up your selves, &c. Praying in the Holy Ghost, Jude vers. 20, Praying in the holy Ghost, is a main way to build you up, i. e. to help you to that which must build you.*

2. Is it an act of the heart? *Coral. 1.* Then, if thy heart be not after Jesus Christ, thou art yet an unbeliever. Is it an act of the heart? an act of the will? And what is that but willing and consent? Then if thy heart be another way, after the heart of thine abominations, or detained by the World; thou art yet an unbeliever, though baptized with *Simon Magus*, and wonderest. If thou canst not call Jesus Lord, *1 Cor. 12. 3. Wilt not that he shall reign over thee. Luk. 19. 27,* thou art an enemy; God hath not yet shined in thy heart. *2 Cor. 4. 6, His People are a willing people. Psal. 110. 3,* If he cannot have thy heart, he cares not for thy *et cætera's*, whatever they be.

*Cor. 2.* Then it is not fear that makes thee a Christian, but will and desire. Though fear of being damned, may make people scramble after Jesus Christ; yet fear is no principle of union and communion with him. Though no Man would have him, unless constrained; yet meer constraint makes not Faith, nor thee a Christian. *Metus non est magister diuturni officii,* Fear is no master of constant obedience. It is, *If any man will be my disciple, Matt. 16. 24. If any man will, let him come, Rev. 22. 17.*

*Cor. 3.* Then, to win upon thy self, to become a believer, you must do as men would do, to per-

perswade and gain their hearts in other cases: How is that? Sit down and consider; ponder and meditate upon Jesus Christ. It is true, if the Lord prevent your meditations at first, by quick and clear discoveries of himself, the business is sooner done: But the method that first and last you are to put your self upon, is this, *It is the will of the father, that they see the Son, and believe, Joh. 6. 40.* And how shall they see, that never look?

Cor. 4. Then is thy heart after the Lord Jesus; hath he gained thy will, he hath gained thee. Faith is the act of the heart: and the act of the heart is consent. Thou art a believer, though thou canst not be so confident, nor make so bold with him as others can; nay, though thou beest dreadfully hurried, and harrassed with temptations, though the Devil would imbitter thee by strange and horrible representations of him, make thee believe he is rather a Judg than a Saviour: Nay, though actually imbitter'd, if habitually inclin'd. This was the open proclamation Jesus Christ made of himself; *If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.* And it was almost the last word he left upon Record to the World, *Let him that is athirst come: and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely, Rev. 22. 17.* Will, i. e. absolutely will, not conditionally, which I have elsewhere explained.

## CHAP. V.

I come now to the third particular, The Object with the Act; or the Act upon the Object, as in the definition, whereby it apprehends and receives Jesus Christ.

The Object I largely spake to, in the first Proposition: Where I shewed you the material Object, and the formal Object of saving Faith. I shall only prove here, that this is no nice distinction; and then proceed.

Consider, In other things, That may be the material object of an act, which yet as formally and diversly considered, is much another thing. *Ex. gr.* The body of Man is the material object, both of the Philosopher, and the Physician. The first considers it, according to its nature and properties, as a body: The other considers the same body, but *qua medicabile*, as exposed to divers Diseases, and how it may be cured. So the School-Divines may consider Conscience, as to its general nature and properties; the Casuist, in relation to such and such particular doubts with which it is perplexed, and how it may be resolved. Thus in our present case, Jesus Christ in his latitude, Faith hath to do with; but this person as working righteousness, is that peculiarly which Faith hath to eye for Salvation.

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*Qu. But what is this receiving Christ? or what is this act in relation to this saving object.*

*Ans.* I have shewed you already, that it is the act both of mind and heart: I now come more particularly, to give you an account what it implies. I count there are these four or five things implied, or intimately conjoyned in it.

1. A Beggarly sense. 2. An hungry desire. 3. Some free subjection to the will of God for Salvation. 4. Acceptance of Christ as a donative, or a free gift. 5. Conjugal consent unto him.

*1st,* A beggarly sense in it self. The Soul finds it self in a poor estate, and perishing condition in it self, and of it self. For 1. Christ is a necessary good. And 2. Though necessary, yet a spiritual Good, such as the heart will not brook, until, 3. convinced of his necessity. God is fain therefore to make a man poor, and bring him into the dust, that he may be beholding. *Luk.* 7. 22, *Unto the poor, the Gospel is preached,* *πωχοι ἐυαγγελίζονται, Evangelium audiunt & accipiunt,* The poor receive the Gospel. *He hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, Isa.* 61. 10. Which signifies the most inward trouble they have, because they are at a loss for Salvation, and Gods favour. Here note: It is not every one that is troubled, though for sin, that is come thus far: For he that can work for his living, and live by the work of his hands, is not an absolute poor man. He that by better ordering, and diet, can cure himself, will not go to the Physician. Men that are troubled for sin, will many times not do as they did, but fall to duty,

duty, mend their manners and carriages, and be a little more observant than they use to be: But that trouble, which ceases this way, is not well got off; but will either return again, or leave thee worse than it found thee. That man is poor indeed, or a beggar in spirit, who knows not what shift to make, but must be beholding to others, or he starve; that man is poor indeed, who is beat out of the conceit of his own self-righteousness and self-sufficiency.

*Object.* But does not God's people complain, that they cannot so see into their own vileness, and the shortness of their own righteousness, but that they are apt to trust in themselves?

*Ans.* Though they grow in more clear, solid, express convictions of their own unrighteousness, and the need of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, yet trust to their own sufficiency is not a reigning sin in them, as no other.

2. It implies an hungering and thirsting desire. For no man receives any thing but what is good; and what is good (especially, if incomparably so), the needy man eagerly desires. Christ is propounded under the notion of bread, and bread of life, *John 6. 35, I am the bread of life. Ver. 51, And the bread which I will give, is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.* Which implies, men must have an hungering after him. The like is to be said of thirsting, which is the same thing under another allusion. When a person is once come to this pass, he may without all doubt come confidently: *If any man thirst, let him come, &c! Joh. 7. 37, He every one that thirsts, let him come. Isa.*



55. 1. Such are most apt to question, whether they may come or no: *But may I come?* Yea, come. 'Tis an answer to as many quæries as you would make, to encourage and invite you to come confidently. I shall go before I am called, says one: I am afraid, it is too much presumption in me to come; therefore they are invited. Sinners are invited to come, especially lost sinners; but most of all hungry and thirsting sinners. And I may tell you, this hungry and thirsting is the very *causa continens fidei*, the very seed and root of Faith, the very essence and nature of it: therefore they are pronounced blessed at the present, *Mat. 5. 6, Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness.* Only here take heed you mistake not the general desires of happiness, for this hunger and thirst: See Chap. 3. verse 31.

3. Receiving implies a ready subjection to the will of God for supply: For he that receives, takes what is offered; and God offers his Son, *John 6. 40, This is the will of him that sent me, that he that seeth the Son and believeth on him, may have everlasting life.* Seeing God hath made this the condition and prerequisite of those that will be saved, the soul must be brought to Gods terms, for he will not come down to ours: lest he will not, though he give this. Submission to this way of Christ, is the hardest way of all. If God had bid us go Pilgrimages, say over never so many *Pater-nosters*; men would have done it: But this is against nature, yet the soul in believing submits to it. Faith excludes non-submission, therefore receiving doth imply it. Hence Faith in this sense is properly called obedience, as being sub-  
mission

mission to Gods will and way for Salvation (though otherwise, faith and obedience are often distinguished, and opposed), *Rom. 16. 26, Made known amongst all nations for the obedience of Faith, Rom. 10. 16, They have not all obeyed the Gospel: For Isaiah saith, Who hath believed our report? They had not all obeyed, they had not all believed. Therefore also it is called a work, and the work of God, John 6. 29, This is the work of God, that ye believe, i. e. that which God requires, and hath a primary respect unto. This non-submission to Jesus Christ, cut the Jews off from all priviledg, as is implied, John 1. 11, 12.*

4. It implies a willingness to take Jesus Christ as a donative or free gift. Christ is the gift of God, *John 4. 10, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, &c. Isa. 9. 6, For unto us a child is born, and unto us a Son is given: If so, then Faith must receive Christ, δωρεάν, gift-wise: for God will be honoured in all his gifts, especially his greatest; poor beggarly creatures ready to perish will take any thing, and I thank you, Rom. 3. 24, Being justified freely by his grace, δωρεάν ἡ χάρις καὶ τὸ δῶρον, It is not only by grace, but freely also: For Joseph found grace in the eyes of Pharoah, but it was because he had that which commended him unto his favour, as P. Martyr observes: But this is not so, but δωρεάν, as well as ἡ χάρις. And therefore 'tis God hath set it upon Faith, that he might have all the glory of it, Rom. 4. 16, Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace, κατὰ χάριν, according to grace, or for nothing, as the Hebrew word which answers to it, is sometimes rendred, Mal. 1. 10, Who amongst*

You will shut the doors, or kindle fire upon mine altar: *Chimnam, gratis*, we render it, for nought. Paul therefore sets all upon the account of mercy, or Gods meer bowels and grace, *1 Tim. 1. 16, ἡμῶν, I obtained mercy*. If we could buy favour of God, or purchase Christ, we would; but we must be beholding as beggars.

5. There is implied a conjugal consent to Jesus Christ, or taking him as a woman doth her husband. The Church is therefore called the Bride, *John 3. 29. Rev. 21. 9, Come hither, and I will shew thee the bride, the lambs wife. Eph. 5. 31, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church*, Which shews, that these expressions are not Hyperbole's, but real. The whole Book of the *Canonicles* speaks to this. To make it clear, consider,

1. There is a real union betwixt Christ and a believer, *John 17. 21, 22, 23. That they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us. Verse 22, That they may be one as we are one. Verse 23, I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one*. And this you see, is *ad similitudinem unionis Dei & Christi*. Will any man say this is meerly moral? Moral union is an union of spirits only, this is of persons: I do not say personal, *Col. 1. 27, Christ in you the hope of glory*.

2. There must therefore be a foundation of this union, and the foundation of a real union, must it self be real: on Christ's part it is so; for he gives himself, *Eph. 3. 17, That Christ might dwell in your heart by faith. Gal. 2. 20. On the souls*  
part

part also it must be real, viz. Its consent to Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. 8. 5, *They gave themselves first to the Lord.* Rom. 7. 4, *Ye also are become dead to the Law, by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him that is raised from the dead.* Marriage is not, but by consent, it being the most near strict union that can be in things that is not natural.

**Corrolary 1.** You see then, receiving Christ, outs a man quite of himself: I mean not of his nature, but as well of his righteous, as his unrighteous or sinful-self. The material object routs man of self-wisdom, and self-will; and the formal object, of his own righteousness; Christ as King, outs a man of his own will; as a Prophet, of his wisdom; as Priest, of his righteousness. I mean not, that it quite rids them of them, but delivers them from them, not from their being, but their being absolute, lord, and chief.

1. Of his own wisdom. Man hath not wisdom to know what is saving, or to know it in a saving manner, 1 Cor. 1. 21, *When in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God; it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe. In the wisdom of God, i. e. in the wisdom that remains since the fall. Knew not God, i. e. knew him not savingly.* Jesus Christ delivers such maxims as will not down with the wisdom of man; and those both speculative and practical, (pardon the distinction, for it is something improper in the case), vers. 23, *We preach Christ crucified unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness.* Man is stumbled, both at the things revealed, and the way of revelation, or

his dealing with men in the Gospel ; requiring them to take things upon his word, without natural demonstrations: *Intrare in tenebras fidei*, as *Luther*. *Credere ut intelligant*, *Austin*. For the Greeks seek after wisdom, *verf. 22, i. e.* natural demonstration. But God goes not this way to work, but requires Faith to his revelation, and often reveals such things as natural reason cannot fathom, though nothing contrary to right reason. And this is the cause why of all things the Gospel meets with such opposition ; though it be the most reasonable thing in the world to believe, that our reason cannot fathom Gods counsel: But he that chooseth a master, must take to what lesson he sets him ; and so he that owns Christ as a Prophet : therefore *verse 24*, *But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God*. I might instance here also in practical maxims which the wisdom of the flesh will not down with, as *to overcome evil with good*, *Rom. 12. ult.* *To condescend to men of low estate*, *verse 16*, *Not to be desirous of vain glory*, *Gal. 5. ult.* (To do the best, and glory in nothing) To live in perpetual self-denial, take up the cross, *Mat. 16. 24*. But Christ makes all his Disciples own these to be ways of wisdom. It is one of the greatest priviledges in the world for a man to disown his own, and live upon the wisdom of Jesus Christ.

2. Of his own will. For if a man addict himself to the Sovereignty of Jesus Christ, his will must be, *to please him who hath chosen him to be a souldier*, *2 Tim. 2. 4*. God wills that *he be conformable to the image of his own Son*, *Rom. 8. 29*.

And



And what was that, but to accommodate himself to his Fathers will? *Heb. 10. 9, Lo, I come to do thy will.* Men absolutely set upon their own wills and ways, are no true Christians. Servants use not to do their own will: and *he that is called in the Lord, though a free-man, is yet Christ's servant,* 1 Cor. 7. 22. This is the meaning of that Scripture, *Luke 7. 21, The kingdom of God is within you,* i. e. exercises its power and authority in the very heart and consciences of men; wherein Jesus Christ is above all the Kings and Emperours in the world.

3. Of his own righteousness, not the having it, but the trusting in it. *Job 9. 20, If I justify myself, my own mouth shall condemn me: if I say I am perfect, it also shall prove me perverse. Enter not into judgment with thy servant,* says David, *for in thy sight shall no man living be justified,* Psal. 143. 2. Good nor bad: Therefore, *Enter not into judgment with thy servant.* But what things were gain to me, *I counted loss for Christ,* says Paul, Phil. 3. 7, 8, 9, and desires to be found in him, not having his own righteousness which is of the Law; but that which is through the faith of Christ: *The righteousness which is of God by faith.* He means not only the former works of his Pharisaism, but even his works in the state of grace, as appears by his present assertion, *verse 8, Yea doubtless, and I count all things, &c.* and by the opposition: *but that which is through the faith of Christ.* For inherent righteousness is not properly a righteousness by faith, but faith is rather through it, viz. as springing from the root of grace in the soul. *They that trust in themselves, need no such Saviour,* as the Gospel

pel tenders; never sufficiently considered Law or Gospel, themselves or their Mediator.

*Corrolary 2.* This commends to us both the study of the Law and the Gospel together, and that both to good and bad. Of the Law, because by it *comes the knowledge of sin*, Rom. 3. 20. We think we transgress not the Law so long as we transgress not in outward act: but the Law understood in its spirituality, shews us that we are lost. And *Christ comes to seek and to save that which is lost*, Luke 19. 10. The ignorance of this, makes men so stumble at the confessions of Gods servants. 2. Of the Gospel, because this discovers the abundant and super-abundant fulness of Jesus Christ for our supply, Rom. 5. 20, *Where sin abounded, grace hath much more abounded. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell*, Col. 1. 19. *That of his fulness we might all receive, and grace for grace*, Joh. 1. 16.

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## CHAP. VI.

**I** Proceed to the Fourth Particular in the definition, the end *for Salvation*. And because this is capable of divers senses, I shall shew you what is congruous to the case in hand.

*Distinction* 1. An end is either of intention, or execution. 1. The end of Intention is either Primary, or Secondary: The Primary is, that which is aimed at, as the scope of all a mans designs and endeavours; as the end of a covetous man, is to grow rich; and therefore in the second place he buys and sells, &c. 2. The end of Execution is the effect or event of the means in act, or the means using: as health is the issue and effect, by Gods blessing, of means used thereunto. But here consider, that there is a difference between the issue and consequent, and the proper effect of a thing. Something is the issue of another thing which was not properly its cause, but meer antecedent; as for example: A man going to *London*, hath an Estate settled upon him: this Estate of his is not properly the effect of his going to *London*, but the issue and consequent, it is the effect of the good will of his friend, &c. so Salvation is the issue and consequent, but not the proper effect of good works; because they have no deserving quality this way, though man had never arrived there without them, *Heb. 12. 1.*

*With-*

*Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.* Good works are the necessary antecedent, but Salvation is the proper effect of receiving Christ.

*Distinction 2.* Salvation is taken either, 1. For the ultimate, compleat perfection of the person in a way of happiness or deliverance of him from all sin and misery, *Rom. 13. 11, For now is your salvation nearer than when you believed:* Or 2. For the inchoate participations of it here, in pardon of sin, communion with God, some participations of his favour, partial deliverance from sin and misery, &c. *2 Tim. 1. 9, Who hath saved us; and called us with an holy calling, &c. Tit. 3. 5, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, &c.*

Having premised these: I make this First Conclusion. Receiving Christ, whole Christ, is necessary to every one that will be saved. No person may think ever to obtain pardon of sin, peace with God, comfort here, or glory for ever, that doth not receive the Lord Jesus, *Joh. 8. 24, If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.* What is this? Will believing Jesus Christ to be the Messias, save any man? No, but without this, he will never be brought to receive him: and by the spiritual discovery of this, and that special assent before mentioned, *Chap. 1,* the soul is brought home to him: *So ver. 21, Ye shall seek me and die in your sins,* i. e. because ye cannot find me. But this is not all; for in this sense it is true, continue in thy sins and thou art undone: impenitency will undo you, as well as unbelief: close adherence to the world, your want  
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of love to God and your Neighbour, and want of special love to the people of God. This proves Faith only a necessary antecedent. But therefore,

*Conclus.* 2. Salvation is not only the consequent, but the proper effect of believing in Christ, or rather of Christ believed on, and received. To understand this, consider,

1. That from receiving Jesus Christ I come to have interest in his righteousness, *Rom.* 3. 22, *Even the righteousness of God which is by the faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe.*

2. The formal proper cause of my Salvation is this righteousness of Christ received and imputed, *Rom.* 5. 21, *Grace reigns through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord*, i. e. God dignifies us with this great favour, because he sees us righteous; and this by Jesus Christ, *Rom.* 4. 6, *Even as David describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works.* Ver. 13, *For the promise that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham or his seed through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.*

3. Faith hath only the influence of a condition or instrument in this matter, *Eph.* 2. 8, *By grace ye are saved through faith.* *Rom.* 3. 30, *Seeing it is one God which shall justify the circumcision by faith. and the uncircumcision through faith.* *Phil.* 3. 8, *The righteousness of God by faith.*

So that Faith brings Christ and the soul together; Christ brings righteousness, and that properly brings salvation. Salvation therefore is the proper



proper consequent and effect of Faith, or Christ believed on.

*Conclus.* 3. As Salvation for the future, or the happiness of heaven, is the proper effect of Faith: so also inchoat Salvation, or the participation of it in this life. As,

1. Pardon of sin, 1 Joh. 2. 12, *I write unto you little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name sake.* Acts 10. 43, *To him give all the Prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall have remission of sins.*

2. Communion with God, 1 John 1. 3, *That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.* And what was that which they had seen and heard, but the life which was manifested, ver. 2?

3. Peace and comfort: I mean solid peace and comfort, Rom. 15. 13, *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.* 1 Pet. 1. 9.

*Object.* How comes it then that all believers have not peace, if it be the proper effect of faith?

*Ans.* 1. Heaven is the effect of Faith, and yet we are not immediately possessed of it: we have interest by Faith, though not possession; and so we have in the matter in hand.

*Ans.* 2. Peace is not a necessary effect of Faith, but an arbitrary, i. e. when ever we have it, it is the effect of Faith, but it is not necessary that we have it. Assurance is an effect of Faith, in all that have this assurance; yet it is not such a proper and necessary effect, which is inseperable: *Scudder's daily walk*, p. 592.

*Ans.* 3

*Answ.* 3. We may not be fit for peace and sensible injoyments, though we have interest in them. An heir may have great interest, yet not be fit to mannage his estate.

*Answ.* 4. Though it be the proper effect of faith, yet it is ordinarily communicated in a way of humble, holy walking.

*Answ.* 5. Though we be humble and holy, yet God knows best, when it is best for us, and when to want it.

So as to Communion,

1. Though it be founded in Faith, and the ground of it be Christ believed on; yet other graces concur to it by way of disposition, *i. e.* other graces dispose the person, as well as faith, *John 14. 21, He that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest my self unto him.*

2. Other graces, as love peculiarly, do actively concur in actual communion: For what is communion, but rhe souls holding a most amicable, friendly converse with the Lord?

Question 1. *But may the soul eye its own salvation in its receiving Christ?*

*Answ.* 1. The servants of God have had respect unto it; therefore it is not inconsistent with truth of grace, *Heb. 11. 26, For he had respect unto the recompence of reward.* He persisted in bearing the reproaches of Christ, and counted them greater than the treasures of *Agypt*, for he had respect, &c.

*Answ.* 2. Peace, pardon, salvation, &c. are propounded to us in Scripture, as encouragements, motives, and inducements to receive Christ, *Isa. 45. 22, Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth.* *Isa. 55. 2, Hearken diligently unto me, and*

and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight it self in fatness. Ver. 3, *Encline your ear, and come unto me, hear, and your souls shall live : and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, &c.* which is certain Salvation. What is the whole Gospel, but the revelation of the grace of God, and the love of Christ expressed to sinners ; the effigies and picture of Christ crucified ; and what is the end of all this, but to win us to himself? *Joh. 3. 16. 2 Cor. 5. 19, 20, 21.* Christ is not propounded to us, as *nudus Deus*, meer God, but as *carne nostra vestitus*, as cloathed with our flesh, Christ crucified.

*Answ. 3.* We must else charge all as Hypocrites : for *1 Joh. 4. 19, We love him, because he first loved us :* And particularly the woman, *Luk. 7. 47, Who loved much, because she had much forgiven her :* whom Christ acquits, *v. 50, Go in peace.*

*Answ. 4.* They are a medium to Gods glory ; I mean our pardon, salvation, &c. We should else never glorifie him, nor could he be glorified in our salvation.

*Answ. 5.* The contrary way seems to cancel the Gospel all at once, and only commends Christ to us under the notion of an abstract, absolute perfection and excellency, and not in his theandrical mediatory properties and vertues.

*Quest. 2.* *If you ask me whether we must first eye our own salvation, or benefit ?*

*Answ.* I distinguish between the primary and the first in order ; or between the highest, chief, or last end and intendment, and the first in order, or occurrence. We are to eye these two means and motives, *viz.* Gods grace revealed with relation to this our good, as that which should win and gain

gain us to the closest adherence and admiration of such an infinite good. *Ut ab ijs & per illa* (as Ames says in the case of love), *debeamus ascendere ad divinam naturam ipsam Dei, in se, & propter se diligendam, ut ibi ultimo atquiescamus*: that from and by them, we ought to ascend to the Divine Nature of God it self, to be loved in and for it self: and there lastly acquiesce, *Ames. lib. 4. c. 10.* Notwithstanding the most lovely nature of Jesus Christ, yet no man would ever come to him at this rate; were it not for his grace and mercy: but by that grace I find I cannot but adhere to such an infinite gracious person. The other was the *potior*, but this is the *prior ratio eligendi Christum*; the other were the better way, but this is the nearer way of choosing Christ.

**Corrolary 1.** If Salvation be the effect of believing in Christ, how far are they from happiness and welfare, that are without Christ? *Without Christ, without hope*, Eph. 2. 12. Do you expect peace and comfort? *He is preaching peace by Jesus Christ*, Acts 10. 36. Do you expect he should befriend you upon a death-bed, translate you into *Abrahams* bosom? For what acquaintance? *I never knew you*, Mat. 7. 23.

**Object.** *He is a gracious Saviour.*

**Ans.** It is true, but upon his own terms: *To as many as received him, he gave priviledg to become the sons of God*, John 1. 12.

**Cor. 2.** What peace is that which people have without Christ, and without believing? We may observe people that are very ignorant, and very prophane, not knowing what belongs to Jesus Christ, or the Gospel; yet to be very quiet, full

of peace, jocund and merry, at hearts ease : What must we think of such people ? To think according to truth, is, that they have the Devils peace : better be troubled, than enjoy such a peace. I had rather see people in the Jaylor's condition in the Text: for all true peace is the effect of believing.

*Cor. 3.* Let not them put peace from them, nor refuse to be comforted, that have in truth received Christ. You are bound to believe, peace is yours, if Christ be yours. As he is *King of righteousness*, So he is *King of peace*, *Heb. 7. 2.* *God is well pleased for his righteousness sake*, *Isa. 42. 21.* You'll suppose I mean here whole Christ received.

## C H A P. VII.

**I** Am now come to the last particular in the definition : *Which habit is infused by the special work of the Spirit of God, in, and upon us.*

Where I take it for granted,

1. That there are certain habits in the soul, by which men are disposed to that which is good ; as others by the contrary, to that which is evil : which to deny, contradicts all sense and experience, as well as Scripture, *2 Pet 1. 5, Giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue, &c. Heb. 5. 14, Which by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil, Heb. 5. 14,* by reason of a habit : 'tis the very word the Philosophers use. And what is a good habit, but a principle disposing to well-doing ?

2. That



2. That there are certain infused habits, *i. e.* by Divine Creation produced in the soul : which are therefore called the *fruit of the spirit*, Gal. 5. 22, *But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, &c.* a spirit also, 2 Tim. 1. 7, *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind*; which seems to be so called, because it connotes the efficient cause whence they proceed, *viz.* the Spirit of God, *an unction, and an anointing*, 1 Joh. 2. 2, *But ye have an unction from the holy One.* Ver. 27, *But the anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you*: As seed also, 1 Joh. 3. 9, *For his seed remaineth in him.*

Of this sort is this Faith we are speaking of, an infused habit; which we have not of our selves, nor can obtain by use and practice (as other habits may be gotten); but *ἀνωθεν ἔστι*, Jam. 1. 17, *It descends, or comes down from above.*

*Arg.* 1. Because it is a gift of grace, Eph. 2. 8, *And that not of your selves; it is the gift of God.* Phil. 1. 29, *For to you it is given on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe, but, &c.* *καὶ χάρις ἐχάρισται*, freely given, John 1. 16, *Of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace*: as the child doth limb for limb, and the wax doth print for print.

*Arg.* 2. It is the effect of Divine power, Omnipotent, Irresistible power; therefore it is by infusion, 2 Per. 1. 3, *According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness* *Θεία Δυνάμις*, which is opposed both to our infirmity on the one hand, and resistance on the other, Eph. 1. 19, *And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought*

*in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, Ver. 20. Rom. 9. 19, Who hath resisted his will? which the Apostle uses in the case we are upon, viz. in shewing mercy to whom he will shew mercy, i. e. in softning them, and hardning others. Which may mollify the harshness of this word Power, which is not like flint to flint (as men imagine), but is a sweet mollifying, melting Power.*

*Arg. 3. It is the immediate effect of divine working, i. e. there is nothing comes between the working of God and this effect, this Faith we are speaking of. It is no act of the will of man which makes it effectual; but this makes the will effectual, Col. 2. 12, You are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God. Ver. 13, And you being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh hath he quickned.*

*Arg. 4. This appears more plainly in the sudden Conversions of some we read of in Scripture. All Conversion, strictly so called, is of a sudden (though some may be a long-time in preparation), because converting-grace is infused in a moment. But this most eminently appears in some, as in *Mathew, Zachæus, Lydia, &c. Mat. 9. 9. Luk. 19. from 5, to 10. Acts 16. 14.* It is clear as the Sun, it was not from use and custom they believed; for they were not so much as acquainted with this way before: What was it then that could take them off so suddenly, not only from sin and sinful courses, but world, and all, and elevate, and fix their souls to, and upon such a good, supernatural good, but only grace shining in their hearts?*

*Arg. 5. Those that lye longest under convictions, yet they cannot fix, nor fasten, until the day of Gods*

Gods gracious Visitation. Though they know the Gospel many of them, and though they would faine be out of this condition, something or other keeps them off. *Ephraim*, though chastned, yet is *as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke*: but *after he was turned, he repented*, Jer. 31. 18, 19. The *Jews* case is a common case: pride, self-righteousness, non-submission to an universal Saviour, keeps men off.

*Arg. 6.* In all Conversions, more speedy, or more lingring, every believer is beholding to God for this work of Faith, because beholden for his Regeneration, of which this is a part, 1 *John* 5. 1, *Whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God* (This Scripture I have interpreted before, Chap. 1.) and are therefore said to be children of the promise, *Gal. 4. 28, Now we brethren, as Isaac was, are children of the promise*, i. e. as it was by virtue of the promise that ever *Isaac* was born, and not from the strength of nature, either in *Abraham* or in *Sarah*; so we all, says the Apostle, are children of the promise, i. e. it is by vertue of the Covenant made in *Jesus*, that ever we prove believers. It is the meer product of the promise, and not the strength of nature: See *Perkins* upon the place. And again, they are therefore called both the children of God, and the children of the promise, together, *Rom. 9. 10, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.*

*Arg. 7.* All liberty, i. e. to any thing spiritually good, is from God, *Rom. 6. 18, Being then made free from sin, ye became servants unto righteousness, exultate in domino, liberi liberati*, *John 8. 36, If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed*, i. e. from

their slavery unto sin: and 'tis *ἰσως*, *realiter*, not *eminenter*. q. d. there is no freedom, not a jot, unless the Son make free. But the spirit of faith to receive Jesus Christ, is a spirit of the greatest liberty and freedom, *ergo*.

*Arg. 8.* The Scriptures speak expressly to this very notion and allusion, I mean of infusion, *Zach. 12. 10, I will pour upon the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and supplication: ergo, the spirit of Faith, Isa. 44. 3, I will pour my spirit upon thy seed. Acts 2. 17, And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh, &c.* which is taken out of *Joel 2. 28*, and that Text, *Tit. 3. 5*, is to the same: *By the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly, ἑξέχευ*, which he poured out on us. But if all grace, then this of Faith especially; because of all graces we are naturally more distant from it, and averse to it.

*Arg. 9.* From the insuperable difficulties of faith, it appears it must be by infusion. To make short, these difficulties are,

1. From fancy and imagination. These being wholly naturaliz'd and used another way, cannot be brought into the way of faith. As,

1. Unto things sensible and earthly: as a Christian *walks by faith, and not by sense*, *2 Cor. 5. 7*, so others walk by sense, and not by faith. How hard a matter must it be, think you, to represent Christ to such a person, as more real than the world, and any thing in the world; more real under guilt, than sin it self; and that he hath more vertue in him to save, than sin to destroy: considering the advantage of

of sense, disadvantage of things spiritual, and that he hath neither will nor reason to help him?

2. Mans natural imagination runs in the way of doing. Consider *Pagan* or *Christian*, all the world over, you'll find it so, *Mat.* 19. 16, *Good Master, what shall I do that I may have eternal life?* *John* 6. 28, *What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?* Even those convinced ones, *Acts* 2. 37, cry out, *What shall we do?* Fancy is more real with such men, than any thing, even groundless fancy: and they can never be brought to imagin otherwise, unless God shine in the heart; which is the thing I urge it for. Therefore infusion is necessary.

2. From reason: because it is impossible for reason to apprehend and judg this to be the way of wisdom, and the only way: For, *1 Cor.* 1. 23, *Christ is unto the Greeks foolishness.* A man hath first to unlearn himself, and his natural apprehensions, before he can learn Christ, *1 Cor.* 3. 18, *Let him become a fool, that he may be wise.* What? Doth Religion and the way of Faith make a man a meer fool? No, but respectively to what he thought, and judged before. Reason is universally offended at Christ, at his Person, at his Offices, at his way of Salvation. Reason as it is in us, is against all things spiritual, especially against that method of Salvation which God hath prescribed; most especially against Jesus Christ: not that one thing reasonable is contrary to another; but reason in *subjecto*, as it is in us, always judges according to the interest of the flesh; and he that judges according to interest, is always a corrupt judg.

3. From a corrupt will: because it is so hard to bring men off from the way of their sins, to a cor-



dial compliance with Christ. Sin and the soul must part, when Christ and the soul come together. The soul must be a *chast Virgin for Christ*, 2 Cor. 11. 2. Sin corrupts it. Mark what Christ says, *Joh. 5. 44, How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another?* Why? what does this hinder? because, while the opinion of men is more to them, than the esteem of Jesus Christ, they will steer so, as to keep in with men. Every sin, like so many giants, appears in arms to defend their castle, when the sanctifying Spirit would enter the soul; and nothing can take them off, but the love and kindness of God, and the spirit of Regeneration, *Tit. 3. 3, 5.*

4. From imaginary righteousness. Men may have a negative righteousness, an outward righteousness, and a righteousness of their cause, they are better than others, or not so bad as many: and this will go a great way with them: *God I thank thee, I am not as other men*, Luke 18. 11. Man thinks he hath of his own, and why should not his own be accepted? So long as he can live of himself, he will not be beholding to his Neighbours; so long as he hath wherein to trust, Christ is a stone of no use to him: therefore, it is the design of God in vocation, to dismount this confidence. *Scopus vocationis est prosternere fiduciam, & confidentiam in fœdere legali*, the end of vocation is to throw down the trust and confidence in the Law-covenant, which consists in *opinione ad faciendum, & in opinione justitiæ propriæ*, in a conceit that they can do, and in an opinion of their own righteousness, *Ames. p. 92. De traduct præcatoris ad vivum*. Pride is natural to corrupt nature; and the nature of it is, to admire its own: Therefore it

is said of the *Jews*, Rom. 11. 28, *As concerning the Gospel, they are enemies*; Enemies to the Gospel, the way of Salvation! That's a strange thing indeed! but the reason is, man is a proud creature, and will not be beholden (so long as he can make shift), either to God or Christ: hence *Paul*, Phil. 3. 2, calls them *evil workers*, that yet never left preaching up works, because it was to decry Christ and his righteousness. You may read your own hearts by the obstinacy and opposition of the *Jews*; they persisted in this, to their own utter ruin and rejection. It is an uncouth thing for a man to become a naked creature, a meer nothing in the matter of his Salvation. Hence it is, that we have as much ado to bring a convinced sinner to receive Christ, as we had to dismount his natural confidence; which is nothing but the pride of the heart, which will not take to its own mercy. God must sell him mercy, or else he will not have it; because he hath nothing to carry to Christ, therefore it is he keeps off: Hence, *Isa.* 55. 1, We are bid *buy without money and without price*: intimating it is as hard to part with righteousness, as it is with gold and silver.

5. From the Devil, who will keep a grievous stir in the Soul at this time, to set reason, wit, and will, and what not, against it; by darkning the mind, 2 *Cor.* 4. 4, *swallowing up the Soul in sorrow*, 2 *Cor.* 2. 7, and a Hundred more of his devices: If it be impossible to resist one of these, how shall we get from them all, when back'd, and seconded by the Devil?

2. More particularly; *It is the special work of the spirit of God, whereby this faith is infused*. Which I shall speak to, 1. Negatively. 2. Positively.

1. Ne-

1. Negatively, It is not in a way of general concurrence, that it is produced by the spirit, *i. e.* by preserving, and maintaining nature in its being and actings. For thus, grace either saves all, or none at all; for this is alike to all: but Scripture speaks of no such grace; when it says, *By grace ye are saved*, Ephes. 2. 8. *By the grace of God I am what I am*, 1 Cor 15. 10. At this rate, it would be as hard to say, Faith is the effect of Grace; as if I should ask (says one) who is the Father of such a Man? and answer should be made, the Sun in the firmament. *Burgesse vind. leg. p. 89.* For that concurs as a general Cause to the production of Man. At this rate the Spirit is only the general cause of Faith, and Man himself the particular and special.

2. Not barely by general influence of Grace, giving the Word. It's true, the Word is such an instrument, as reveals that which man could never have known, unless God had revealed it: And therefore, in its kind, it is admirably perfect, above all other ways of knowledg. But if the Spirit be said to be the cause of Faith, meerly because he reveals this: Then God affords as special help to them which believe not, as to those which believe. Then what doth James mean? *Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth*, Jam. 1. 18. We must say, of our own will begat we our selves by the help of Truth. Then what does Paul mean? 1 Cor. 3. 7, *So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, nor he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase, i. e.* unto the Word, which is as the seed sown. It's true, the same Apostle says, Rom. 9. 6, *Not as though the word of God hath taken no effect*: Seeming to intimate, that it is the word which hath the great ef-  
fici-

iciency. But it is abundantly clear to our purpose : For by Word here, is meant the Word of Gods covenant, *Vers. 9, For this is the word of promise.* And it is as much as to say, all that were intended in the promise, by virtue of Gods grace revealed in the Covenant, did believe, or obtain the thing promised : Intimating clearly, that Faith was the effect of Gods power, in prosecution of the word of his promise.

3. Not in a way of bare excitation, or assisting-Grace, by some common work upon the mind, and stirring the affections. For what is a bare *blandum alloquium*, or *illicium*, perswasion, or allurement (to take it in the best sense) to a dead Man? What is meer speaking, to make a dead Man alive? It is true, *Lazarus* came forth at Christ's word ; but it was acknowledged an astonishing miracle, even by the Jews themselves ; and there was an Almighty power went along with it, which neither the grave, nor death it self could resist. How often would Christ thus have gathered the Jews, and prevailed not? *Matt. 23. 36, How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth, &c. and ye would not?* Bare illumination, and transient taste, do not effect the thing, *Heb. 6.4,5:*

4. Not in a way of partial efficiency, as if God did part, and man did part of the inward work, as two men by their joynt strength rowl a stone, &c. The inward work, I say ; remember I am speaking of that, of Faith it self. The outward work towards it, Man doth wholly ; but to the inward work, he doth nothing at all : For if so, then the whole glory of the work cannot be ascribed to God ; but part to Man, part to God ; quite contrary to all the Gospel.

Gospel. *For God will be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe ; Because our testimony amongst you was believed, 2 Thes. 1. 10.* Then, 2. (as *Austin* on that Text, *Rom. 9. 16, It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy*) then I say, those words may as well run thus: It is not of God, that sheweth mercy, but of him that willeth and runneth. For if Gods shewing mercy be only a partial cause; then willing and running is a partial cause also. And not only so, but will and endeavour are the main cause: For they make all effectual, as they say.

5. It is not by bare proposing the object in a way of congruity, whereby the Spirit is said to be the cause of Faith. Take men at some times, and in some tempers (say they) in some good moods and fits, in such and such circumstances, and then the proposal shall infallibly prevail. To omit, that men herein run into that absurdity they would avoid: For if infallibly, then not contingently. I say, that God sometimes takes men in their fits and moods of sorrow, &c. *In their month, Jer. 2. 24.* Yet he takes them, not because it is the season of conversion; but it is the season because he takes them, and when he takes them. And therefore it is, that those preparatories end in conversion. You shall see therefore,

1. That Christ meets with *Paul*, when he little thought of meeting with him, in the height of his rage and madness against him, *Acts 9.* But

2. If so, then the praise of mans believing, must be his good temper; Thank you temper: O blessed temper! and what is this, but to resolve Faith into  
good



good nature at last? if you say, but Nature so tempered could not have done, without Gods help. What is this at last, but to make all the Grace of God you cry up, a meer *causa sine qua non*, cause without which it could not have been done? As if a lame man, that had a cure at *London*, whither he could not have gone without a Horse, should at last say, 'thank you Horse.

3. Besides, why should not all this tumble down again; this temper and disposition being alterable, and hap'ly altering ever and anon?

4. It is all one (says *Twiss*) to say, that a blind man by a congruous perswasion may come to see.

5. In those Three thousand converted, *Act. 2*, *Ecquid probabile est, horum omnium unam esse & eandem temperiem?* What three thousand of differing nature and climates, all hit in one temper? If you will say, it is a moral seriousness: Why should not convictions of the Spirit always prevail, and legal workings?

2. Positively, It is the spirits special work: Because this working of Faith proceeds from special love, *Rom. 11. 7*, *The election hath obtained it, the rest were hardened.* Obtained what? To believe: and the rest were left to their hardness. *Phil. 2. 13*, *He worketh, to will and to do of his own good pleasure, & in his eudonias*, not deserved, or desired on man's part first.

2. Because it proceeds from spetial power, i. e. such as he puts not forth in others. It is special in opposition to common, which he affords to many. *Joh. 6. 69*, *We believe, and are sure that thou art that Christ*; it being given to them to believe, *Vers. 65*, when many others believed not, but went back,

back, as in the Context. *2 Thes. 1. 11, Wherefore, we pray that our God would fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power. Rom. 11. 32, He hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy, i. e. a powerful mercy, giving them to believe, which were shut up as men in a Prison, as men left to themselves are.*

Qu. *But how does the spirit work this Faith?*

To answer in a few words.

1. By commending Christ to the Soul absolutely, *Joh. 6. 14.*

2. By convincing the Soul, that Christ is more eligible than any other thing whatever, *Phil. 3. 8. Cant. 5. 10.*

3. By withdrawing his assistance, from natural power to the contrary; or taking down actual resistance as before.

4. By promoting a power to act, according to the deliberate counsel of the mind. *Ames p. 101. de traduct. peccatoris.*

*Corrol. 1. This is great encouragement to dead Souls, to hope and wait, those that are shut up in unbelief. The Gospel is a ministraton of spirit, 2 Cor. 3. 8. Received ye the spirit by the works of the law, or by the preaching of faith? Gal. 3. 2. Jesus Christ is anointed, and furnished with the spirit, for the opening the prison to them that are bound, Isa. 61. 1. God puts you into these streights, that you may know your selves, and his Grace. 'Tis he that worketh in you to will, Phil. 2. 13. God makes the valley of Achor a door of hope, Hos. 2. 15. i. e. a desolate, naked, perishing condition, a disposition to his work. What you have, you must receive, 1 Cor. 4. 7. You must have the very first from*

from him : *For who hath first given to him ? Rom. 11.*

35. Wait therefore, and hope in his grace.

*Cor. 2.* All that will be saved must be beholden, not only to Christ for Salvation, but the spirit to bring Christ and them together : wait diligently therefore, where the spirit uses to breathe : *Faith comes by hearing, Rom. 10. 17.* Because the spirit is received in hearing, *Gal. 3. 2.* Oh, that men would be more careful hearers, and attenders to the word. Do not expect the spirit of God at an Ale-house, in seeking your pleasures, in doing your own wills and works, when you should be hearing the word. You had need, as for life, wait where the spirit is wont to work. This is quite contrary to what men use to argue : if the spirit work it, what need we trouble our selves ? The spirit uses not to do it, but in and by means : and you may use means long enough all your life time, without the spirit. Though I told you the inward work be wholly and altogether the spirits work ; yet all the outward work, *i. e.* means-using, is your work wholly. The spirit doth not hear for you, read for you, meditate for you, &c.

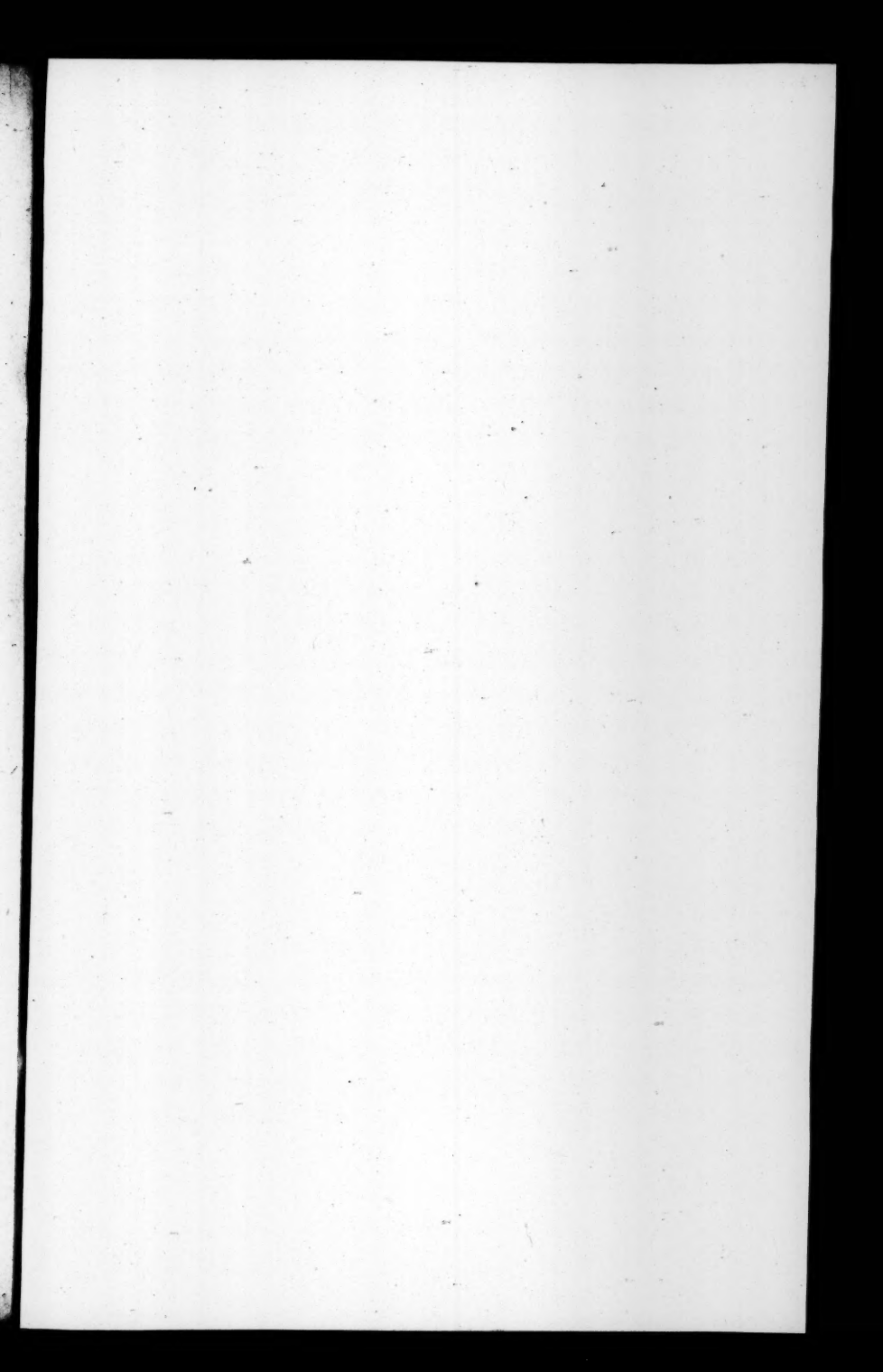
3. For trial, whether we have had this special work of the Spirit of God, or no : let us enquire into, 1<sup>st</sup>, The *Fieri*. 2<sup>dly</sup>, The *factum esse*, the working, or the work done.

1. Have you found it in *fieri*, in working ? hath the spirit been working in a special manner in you (I am speaking especially to those of years), and have you found nothing upon the file, no motions, no stirrings ? Hath the Devil and all the powers of darkness in you been routed and chased, and you heard no noise, found no trouble, nor any thing of obser-

observation? Doth the wind blow, and thou hearest no sound, though thou knowest not whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth; and especially when thou hast been a wicked creature? Is conception without any sense, and being born too? though the particular manner of the spirits working may be secret; yet in the general, have you found no workings upon your thoughts and hearts? Neither whirlwind nor still voice? The Jaylor had an earthquake within him: The three thousand were *pricked at their heart*, Acts 2. 37. *Lydia* and *Zachens* had *their heart opened*, and sweetly enclined: and have you nothing of observation, how, and which way you come to it?

2. But if you say, we find something working and stirring: then enquire into the issue of it. And in as much as I said, grace and power; special grace and special power go to this work of the Spirit: I say consequently, this gracious power

1. Habitually sweetens your spirit towards God, and Jesus Christ. Doth Grace appear, and work nothing? I tell you, the Grace of God appearing, works all things in this new World: *It brings salvation*, Tit. 2. 11. And the special work of the spirit, which he puts forth in working Faith, is to make the glory of this Grace appear in Christ Jesus. Can this appear, and the heart not be sweetened and mollified? though it may be actually imbittered through a present temptation; yet it may be habitually sweetened. It is the Apostles exhortation, Rom. 12. 10, *Be ye kindly affectioned one towards another*. How should this be? If genuine and Christian, it must be for Gods sake: And therefore it implies this kindly affection towards the Lord first.







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